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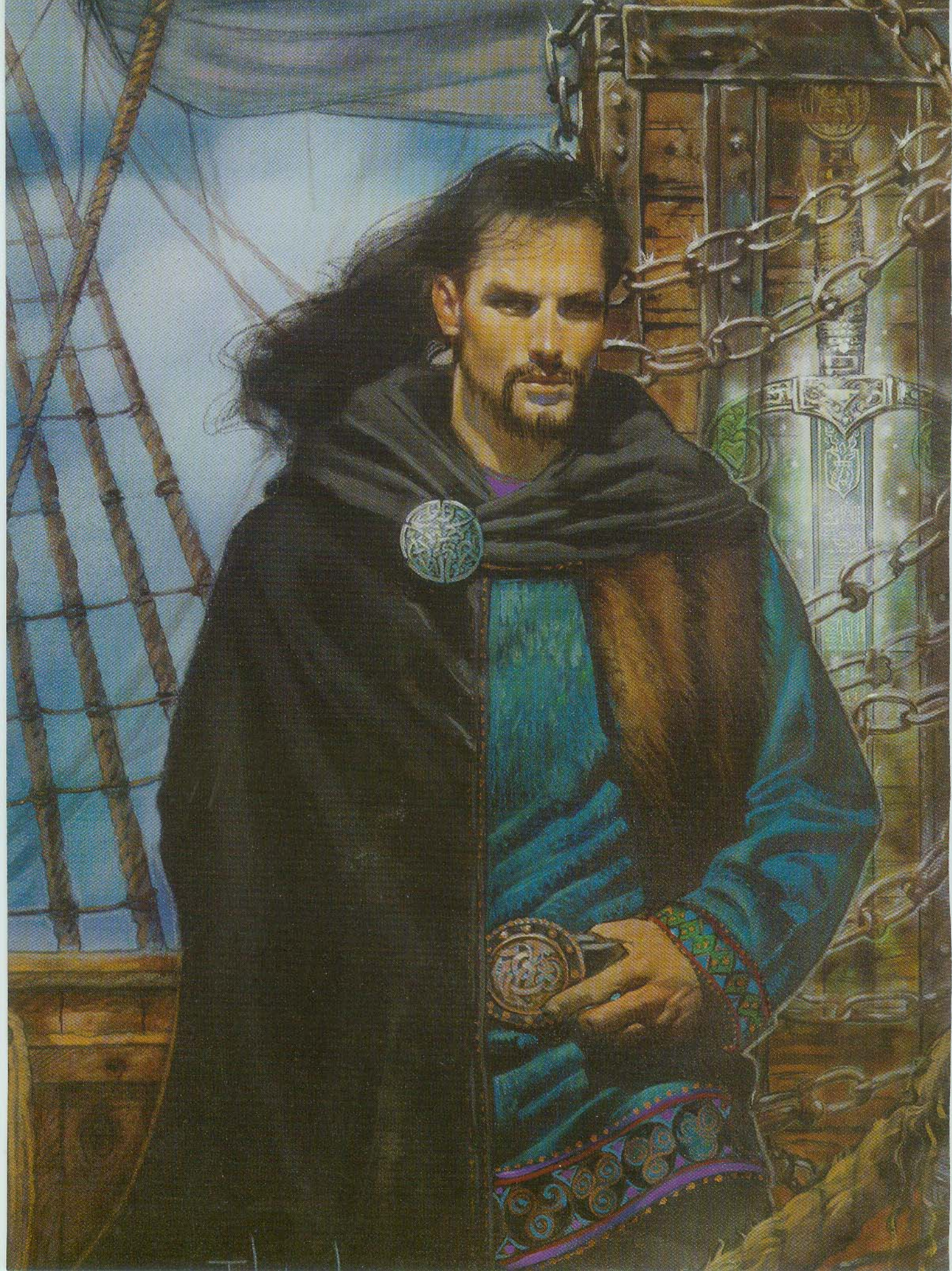

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I'm always stunned by Terese's ability to draw. She's a dream to work with because of her easy-going nature and her mastery at creating a living, breathing character. When I ask Therese for someone "interesting," dollars to donuts she'll give me much, much more. Every time.
—Peter Whitley

BLUE COLLAR HERO

When I was 8 years old, I read *The Sword of Shannara* and immediately became enamored with the Four Lands. Terry Brooks's tales of an everyman hero taking up the baton of light and battling the unparalleled powers of the dark appealed to me like almost no other series has done.

How many times have you read novels that feature as a protagonist some noble knight or valiant superhuman? These stories are great because they lead us into the minds of people who are nothing like us. They let us escape into the bodies of unmatched swordsmen, mighty spellcasters, or even seemingly normal people who discover some well of untapped power within them that enables them to accomplish feats undreamed of by normal folk. Imagining ourselves as these heroes gives us an escape from our normal life; it lets us pretend we don't sit in a cubicle or classroom for 40 hours a week. There's nothing wrong with this type of magic.

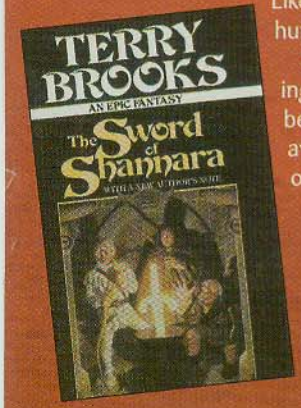
But like Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring*, the Shannara novels often put us in the shoes of the common man. Brooks's heroes aren't mighty wizards. They rarely have training in any kind of weapon use, let alone stand as the pinnacle of ability as a master of the blade. Most don't have any supernatural ability of particular note. They are farmers, innkeepers, or hunters. They are, in effect, commoners.

That said, there's nothing common about Shea Ohmsford when he faces the Warlock Lord. There's nothing common about Par when he and his Ohmsford kin fight the Shadowen to free the magic of the Four Lands. In the end, we find that these common characters, who are much like you and I, are not so common after all. The heroes of Shannara give us the youthful hope that we too might wake up one day and be able to change the world, to somehow find it within us to bring some magic back into our lives.

In a way, these books have more to do with my interest in roleplaying games than any other fantasy series. They made me believe that I too could be a hero and save the day. More than reading about characters whose stories, although full of inspiring courage and adventure, featured their amazing prowess in some area, the tales of the Ohmsfords and their human struggle to understand an inhuman force struck a chord within me. I could more readily understand them as people. If you haven't ever read these novels, I highly encourage you to do so. Like almost no other story can, they put you in touch with the hero you harbor within.

The new edition of D&D lets you play any kind of hero. If you enjoy fantastic, powerful heroes, you can do that, customizing your character with not only class but also with templates, feats, and skills. But if you want your character to be a little more normal, a little more "common," you can do that too. Like the characters of the Four Lands, you can play someone of humble beginnings and heroic spirit.

So which do you prefer to play? Do you like the feeling of rising above your station from a character whose beginnings might be more like your own? Or do you prefer to immediately step away from yourself, experiencing the life and abilities of someone completely unlike yourself?



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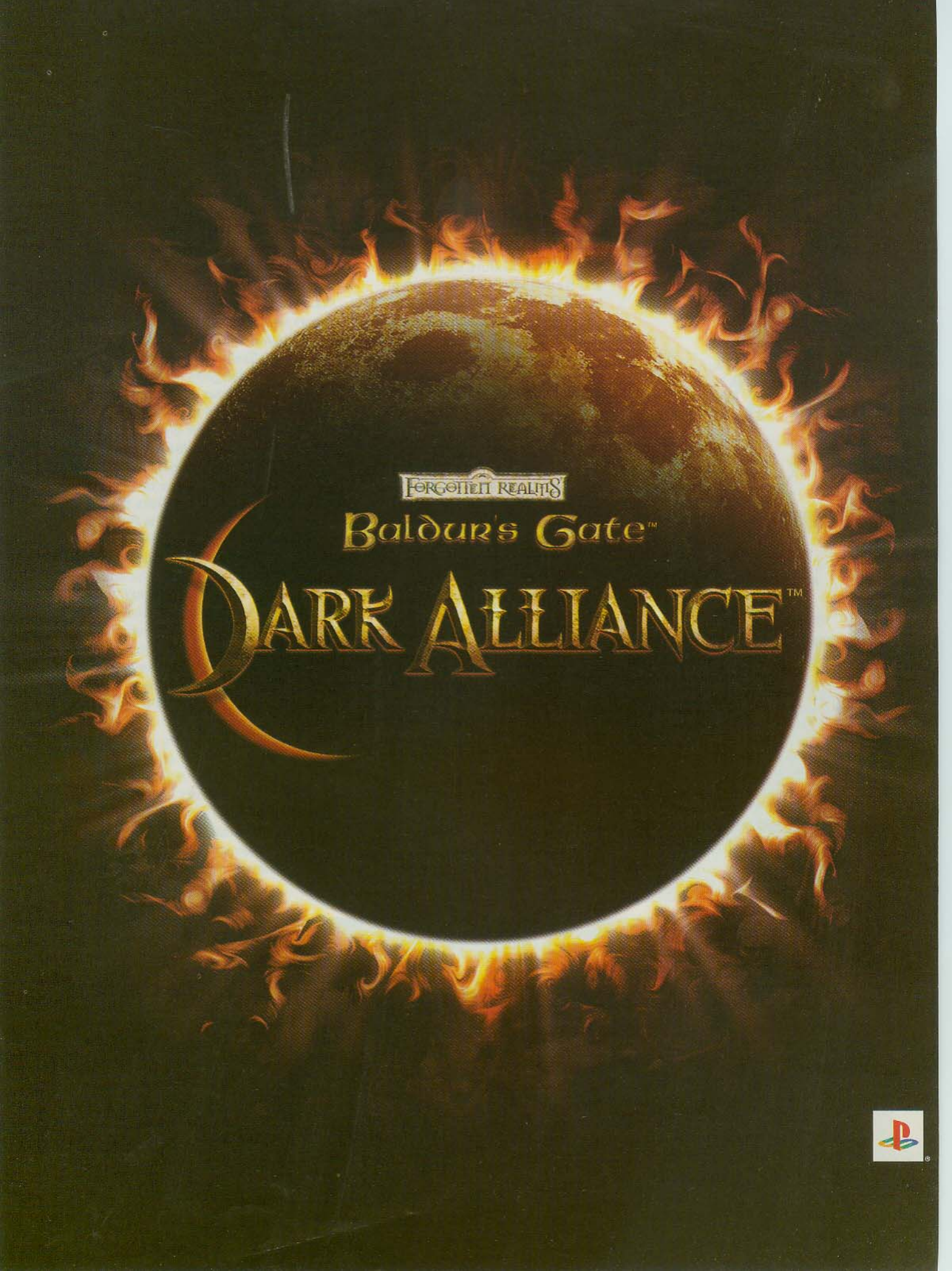
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SCALE MAIL

*We've been receiving more letters than ever lately, and long ones! Remember that we'll edit for length and clarity, and that you can also post your thoughts at **www.wizards.com**. Whether you use snail mail, email, the message boards, or—our favorite—postcards, keep 'em coming.*

The Secret is Out

It was with a mixture of exhilaration and trepidation that I read part of May's issue. I have used *National Geographic* as a resource for years. I thought to myself, "Oh, no! They know! Now the secret's ruined!" But then I realized that it probably wasn't all that secret in the first place.

I want to thank you for mentioning an excellent magazine with tons of useful information for games of all kinds. If I want a map of a real Egyptian tomb layout, or to see how much abuse a viking longship could take, or to design a ritual based upon real ancient cultures, I look in *National Geographic*. I then use my *DRAGON* collection and core rulebooks to "put the stats to it."

I am glad that *DRAGON Magazine*, by far my favorite, has found a place within its hallowed pages to recognize another magazine useful to gamers.

Patrick Gipson • Hammond, LA

To share your secret D&D resources with everyone, drop us a postcard with the tip for "Random Encounters."

Running in Circles

I am reading issue #283, and let me say at the outset that this is a great issue. I love how easy it is to create deities in the new edition! Also, I think the artwork and layout are astounding.

I was reading the fleet runner of Ehlonna Prestige Class on page 45, and I ran into a snag. The fleet runner has a class feature called Bonus Spells. The chart says that a fleet runner should gain 1 bonus spell, but the example in the Bonus Spell feature says that, when the fleet runner gains 1st level, she receives two bonus spells: one for the highest divine level that she can cast and one for any other divine level she can cast. This sounds like two spells to me. I do not think the description of the Bonus Spells class feature on pages 44-45 is clearly written. Does the example mean that when the Fleet Runner advances to 2nd level she gains two spells of the highest divine level she can cast and two spells for any lower divine level she can cast? This seems like it would be four total spells, but that is not what your example implies. Please clarify the Bonus Spells class feature of the fleet runner of Ehlonna prestige class for me.

Eric Evans • Plymouth, NH

We consulted Boy Genius James Wyatt, author of the article in question. He points out and corrects the error:

"The table is correct, the example is incorrect. To gain 2 bonus spells, the cleric in the example would have to advance to an even-numbered level. The problem is that the text is based on

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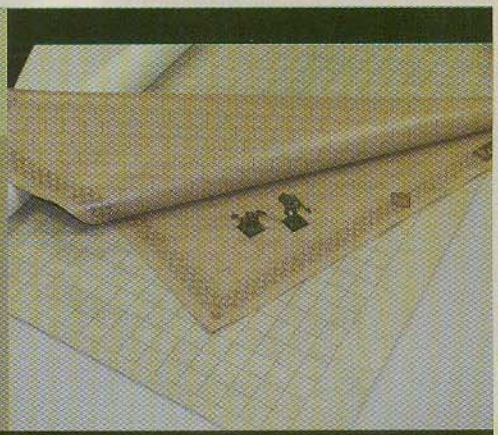

At least two companies currently produce vinyl mats for miniatures. While the *Battlemats* by Chessex come in a wider variety of sizes, colors, and grid options, the *Combat Mats* by Crystal Caste have the advantage of printing on both sides, one in hexes, the other in squares. The largest Crystal Caste mat is 2 inches wider than the Chessex version, but the decorative border means fewer hexes. We prefer the way the erasable markers work on the *Battlemats*, but you can make your decision by checking out www.chessex.com or www.crystalcaste.com.

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Game Face

When not chained to his desk, Matt spends his time imagining what life would be like without DRAGON *Magazine.*

Name: Matthew Sernett
Alignment: Neutral Self-Righteous
Years Gaming: 15
Favorite Race: Monkeys
Favorite Class: Rogue—you live longer
Favorite Setting: That's a tough decision, but if I had to burn my FORGOTTEN REALMS products, I'd be kept warm through a nuclear winter.
Greatest Gaming Moment: The PCs were investigating a hidden chamber beneath an English manor house. They had been trapped in the manor while someone went on a murder spree, so when they found an Egyptian sarcophagus, they were convinced that opening it would cause a murderous mummy to rise up to attack them. Needless to say, they opened it anyway and beheld a mummy clutching a jeweled staff. Instantly, a supernatural darkness snuffed out the light, and they heard the mild-mannered and previously unsuspected Egyptian doctor gleefully shout, "At last I have the staff of Amon-Ra!"
With wide eyes and pale faces, all six players simultaneously said "Oh, sh—!"

Show us *your* game face. Send a photo and a brief description of your gaming background, including your "vital statistics" (years gaming, your "gaming alignment," favorite race, class, and setting) and a short description of your greatest gaming moment. Keep it all under 100 words, and you might see your mug right here. Send us your game face by post or email it to dragon@wizards.com.

the mystic prestige class in DRAGON *274, which gets more bonus spells than the fleet runner.*

So, at 1st level, you get one bonus spell, which you can put in any spell level you can cast. At 2nd level, you get 2 bonus spells, but you can't put more than one in your highest-level spell slot."

May Issue Issues

I don't get the RPG Hellas's complaints (in issue #283) vis-a-vis the rankings of Xerxes—who fought campaigns, intrigued, and used diplomacy, including a multi-year foray against the Scythians, before ever setting foot in Greece—and Leonidas, who fought in one or two battles each year and otherwise just drilled. The D&D system rewards those who do (the PCs) well over those who drill (NPC militia).

[RPG Hellas] give Leonidas a claim for selecting the Gates as the place to fight (it is the *only* place for such a battle until the Isthmus) and repeat the assertion that only the Spartan warriors were present (the forces included helots and squires, as well as Boetians, Thespeians, Plataeans and a host of others). If one considers Herodotus a bit too hefty to read for confirmation, one might try Pressfield's *Gates of Fire*, a readable, if not perfect, retelling of the events involved in the Persian Wars and the making of a Hoplite army, perfect for any DM looking for military material to throw the players into—or to bolster any lawful evil humanoid force.

The article on D&D movies missed a couple that should be mentioned. *The Black Swan* (1942, Tyrone Power, Maureen O'Hara and a young Anthony Quinn) is the last of the A-list at-sea swashbucklers and deserves mention not only for the pirate-hunter theme but also for the politicking ashore (for the DM who wants an intrigue adventure directly hooked into the campaign, its just too good to pass up). Likewise, the last version of *Scaramouche* (1954, Stewart Granger) is notable for the layered history of the hero, the extensive display of the training needed to attain sword mastery, and lastly the best duel scene in Hollywood; Inigo and Westley's clifftop one and the sadly abbreviated two-on-one sequence from the last *Star Wars* movie not withstanding.
D.J. Brown • dark_nomad@hotmail.com

Much as we DRAGON *goobs love history, we enjoy seeing the experts duke it out even more. What's even better are corrections to the "factual errors" in mythology. Mark Petersen takes us to task for just such a "mistake:"*

DRAGON Unfair to Death Gods

In issue #283 your "Do-it-Yourself Deities" article contained a number of factual errors when it came to the alignments of various gods in the pantheons you gave as examples. By far the most glaring misstep was in the Greek Pantheon. For some reason, your staff once again chose to label the Greek god of the dead, Hades, as neutral evil. Nothing could be further from the truth! This is the same kind of mistake that was made years ago in TSR's *Deities & Demigods*. It's enough to make any serious student of ancient mythology cringe. Perhaps some of your otherwise excellent *DRAGON* staff need to do their homework.

Hades was never viewed as evil by the Greeks, nor was death for that matter. Remember, the Greeks invented Stoicism, which made many of them

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

If you find that Dungeon Tiles are too flat and 3-D models are too expensive, you might consider trying your hand at creating your own dungeon settings. A fantastic substance to start with is Sculpey. It's available in 2-pound blocks at most arts and crafts or art supplies stores. The substance is less messy than clay and doesn't dry if you leave it out. When your tiles are modeled to your satisfaction, bake them in the oven, then paint them up. You could even make a whole to-scale castle if you're feeling ambitious!

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fun•ny (fun'ē) *adj.* 1.a. A duck.

Although this cartoon is already funny, we know you can think of a caption for it that will just put it over the top. Send it in, and should our impartial panel of scientists determine that your submission is both funny *and* easy to read you may be immortalized within the pages of *Dragon*. Heck, we might even appropriate a prize or two from someone's cubicle. Send your caption to Caption/Dragon magazine, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.

TONY MOSELEY

dispassionate about a lot things—death included. Death was inevitable. Death was part of life, and there was nothing you could do about it. The Greeks attached no moral value to death: Death was neither a good thing nor a bad thing. It just was. The Greeks had no sense of Heaven or Hell, so being dead was seen as being in a kind of limbo, which explains why Hades was never viewed as an evil god. He was "just doing his job." Remember, he didn't get the job of being god of the dead through some sort of evil or abhorrent behavior; Hades merely came out at the short end of a drawing of lots with his two brothers, Zeus and Poseidon.

Other than that episode and the famous kidnapping of Persephone, Hades rarely appears in Greek mythology. He is never seen as a trickster god causing havoc and evil, as many other gods of the dead are (and your neutral evil alignment would imply). In fact, what makes Greek myth so unique is that nearly all the acts of evil that befall mankind are self inflicted. Man is the source of most of the evil in the world, not the gods.

Mark Petersen • Prescott, AZ

As much fun as it is to tease you about arguing the "facts" of a god's alignment, Mark, we like the points you raise and share your opinion of Hades, who's not a bad bloke after all. (His big brother Zeus is a rat bastard, on the other hand.) The issue of whether a death god should be evil, neutral, or even good is a hot topic among contributors lately. Watch upcoming issues to see whether one comes to fruition.

Until then, check out these suggestions for expanding the Egyptian pantheon from one of our Italian readers:

Expanding the Pantheon

I read with much joy issue #283, especially the legendary pantheons, since I am extremely fond of ancient Egypt, and am running a campaign set in a fantasy Egypt. Therefore, I would suggest a couple of adjustments to the Egyptian pantheon, based on the myths and legends of ancient Egypt.

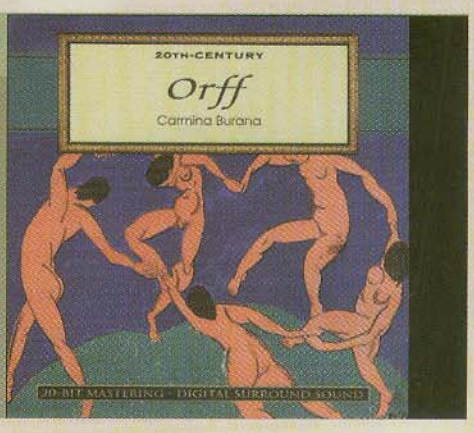
First, you forgot a number of important deities of ancient Egypt, while including a couple of minor ones (such as Bast and Apep, which was not even a god but a demon). The Egyptian pantheon is extremely complex, with more than a thousand deities, but you left out some of the most important:

Ptah, the Creator, god of Word and Truth. I would suggest a lawful neutral alignment and Magic, Knowledge, Sun, and Law as domains. Ptah was worshipped by practically anyone, since he was a god of immense power—according to some myths, greater than the other gods.

Sekhmet was the goddess of War and Healing. She is chaotic neutral, with War, Healing, Strength, and Fire as domains. Her priests were the true medics in Egypt, and the Pharaoh's strength in battle came from her. She is one of the most revered goddesses in ancient Egypt. Typical worshippers were warriors, healers, and the nobles.

random encounters

You might not know the name, but you know this music. You could have heard it in *Excalibur*, or maybe you picked out parts of it in the soundtrack from *Glory*, but what you heard was ***Carmina Burana***. Composed by Carl Orff in the 1930s, the work is an adaption of the "Songs of Bueren," a series of 13th-Century poems. *Carmina Burana* is an operatic burlesque, but so long as no one speaks Latin, this music is perfect for all kinds of scenes. Try "Ecce Gratum" for when the PCs have seemingly saved the city. Use "Fortune Plango Vulnera" when that evil cult is just around the corner, and of course play "O Fortuna" during the epic battle.



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Credit Where It's Due

The CD-ROM included with issue #284 omitted an important credit: Jamis Buck designed the random dungeon generator. For more of his D&D utilities, including treasure, NPC, and town generators, check out his website: http://www.rpgplanet.com/dnd3e/generators

Khepri, the beetle, another Sun god. This one was important because it represented the "becoming" of all things on the Earth. Khepri is lawful good, with Sun, Fire, Law, and Protection domains. Worshippers can be scholars, astrologers, and commoners.

Khnum, the potter, god of arts and craftmanship. He created humanity from clay. His alignment should be neutral good, with Good, Earth, Luck, and Water as domains. Artisans and commoners were his typical worshippers.

Sebek, the crocodile, god of fertility and rivers. Sebek is neutral, with the Animal, Water, Destruction, and Trickery domains. Sebek's worshippers were men, commoners, fishermen, and boatmen.

Tefnut, goddess of humidity and water. Her alignment should be lawful good, and she should have the domains Water, Protection, Law, and Magic.

Also, I would change **Horus.** Horus is not at all lawful, since he often uses trickery against Set. I would say that Horus is neutral good.

I hope that these small notes may be of help to everyone interested in running a campaign in an Egyptian-style fantasy world.

Marco Signore • Napoli, Italy

We didn't forget those important gods of the Egyptian pantheon so much as we arbitrarily ignored them to keep the lists manageably short, counting on our faithful readers for supplements.

We received some early responses to our 25th anniversary issue. Most readers loved the extra FORGOTTEN REALMS *coverage, but there's always one guy:*

Elminster Extraction

I have never written to you before because everything was pretty good, and I was too lazy. However, the growing volume of FORGOTTEN REALMS content has incited me to action! I'm not interested in Realms-specific material! I am especially disappointed with the forthcoming regular column about Faerûnian faiths. This will be especially hard to convert to a home-brewed campaign, because new religions don't sprout out of nowhere every month. I will read it and skim for ideas, but I won't be getting my value out of those pages.

Can't the published-setting people be satisfied with the setting-specific books, modules, and novels? Why must Elminster invade my precious *DRAGON Magazine*?

I liked "Dungeoncraft," though I liked it less when it got specific to the author's example world, and I really liked the article "101 Wondrous Whereabouts" because it presented a lot of little ideas that easily work themselves into any campaign.

I liked the monster creation rules (way back in issue #276) because they were useful. If you guys can get your hands on any other in-house documents or things that were cut from the core books, I'd love to see them. I liked seeing monsters like the ulgurstasta and the jawg, but an article on how to do something is a lot more interesting and useful to me than an article describing an example of something (like a pantheon or the characters from a novel).

That's what my ideal *DRAGON Magazine* would look like: less setting-specific articles and more how-to articles. I urge any readers that agree with me to send a letter or email to *DRAGON*—it's your magazine, too!

Chris Walsh • Rexford, NY

We support the FORGOTTEN REALMS *more than other settings because so many more people play in the* FORGOTTEN REALMS*—twice as many as the next most popular setting, according to our last poll, and that number is growing fast with sales of the new book.*

Since "Elminster's Guide to the Realms" presents such transportable locations, we think it's a breeze to convert them to virtually any other D&D setting. At first glance, "Faiths of Faerûn" might seem a little harder to modify, but they can work in most campaigns with just a few changes.

As for more design documents, we agree that they're enormously useful, and we'll print more as soon as they're available. While you wait, check out the Wizards of the Coast website for an update to the monster design guide.

Viva La Faerûn!

As an avid FORGOTTEN REALMS fan and a DM of an ongoing Realms campaign, I thoroughly enjoyed issue #284! Tops on my list are "Faiths of Faerun" and "Elminster's Guide to the Realms." Magistrati and watchers—excellent! I can't wait to see what multiclass options you show us next. (How about Mask, Malar, Talos, Mystra, Tymora, Selune . . . you get the idea.)

While I'm disappointed that the saurials aren't featured in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Book*, I'm sure that they'll be covered soon. They will be covered soon, right?

Dean Siemsen • Northumberland, PA

Random Encounters

World Explorer looks more like a pulp fiction adventure magazine than a geographic journal. David Hatcher, its editor and founder, is a sort of modern Professor Challenger in both style and function. He travels the world to deliver his first-person accounts of Cargo Cults and other strange phenomenon familiar to *Call of Cthulhu* players and other gamerkind. Equal parts *National Geographic* and *National Enquirer*, WEX is the point at which geekdom collides with field science. Check out www.wexclub.com.

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We hope you like this month's installment of "Faiths of Faerûn." The R&D team liked the first few prestige classes so much that they've increased the coverage of such classes in an upcoming book. Look for it next summer.

As for the saurials, we'd love to bring them back. All it'll take is a good article proposal from a talented FORGOTTEN REALMS *fan, then a smashing manuscript. Let's see some soon!*

The new Realms columns garnered more praise and requests than we could print, but here's some of it:

A Picture Worth 1,000 Words

I am a long-time gamer and Dungeon Master, and I own pretty much every issue of *DRAGON* after number 45. I've always enjoyed your magazine and rarely miss a chance to read it. This issue in particular caught my imagination, so I thought I should compliment you on it in the hopes that you'll continue the feature you are running.

I am referring to Ed Greenwood's excellent article in issue #284 on Mrelgaunt's Turret. This article is well-written and imaginative, as are most all of Ed's fine contributions, and I enjoyed it thoroughly, but what really put the article over the top in terms of excellence was the fantastic cut-away illustration of the tower itself found on pages 76 and 77. David Day has created a great image there and I really loved looking at it. That kind of attention to detail and color really made the whole thing shine.

Please feature more of Mr. Day's wonderful art in the future, especially in conjunction with more of these descriptive articles. I am looking forward to letting my party of characters stumble across the turret in our ongoing campaign, and seeing what they think of the surprise I'm putting on the trap door at the top of the turret.

John Funk • Austin, Texas

You got it, John. David's art and Ed's new column have garnered a lot of praise, and we plan to keep them going strong. In fact, we're taking requests, as Daniel Pack demonstrates next:

Request Night at *DRAGON*

I was reading the 25th anniversary issue of *DRAGON* and would like to make some suggestions as to topics Mr. Greenwood could cover in his "Elminster's Guide to the Realms" articles. When I first picked up the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Atlas,* I was intrigued by some notations that I could find no information on. Of course, I could have missed them in the many supplements that have been out in the years since.

Here are a few that I have always wanted to know about:

- Tulrun's Tent (I know there are some spells by him)
- The Lonely Tower
- Dungeon of the Hark
- Beorunna's Well
- Halls of the Four Ghosts
- Castle Perilous
- Luirbrech (any of the area around the great glacier)

Daniel J. Pack • Eugene, OR

We passed your requests along to Ed, who responded with an enthusiastic, "Right away!" Look for some of those locations to appear in future issues.

Sadly, the "Mrelgaunt's Turret" article was not exactly flawless. Shannon Carl spotted not one but two mistakes:

That's El*mister* to You

On page 75, in the "Elminster's Guide to the Realms" (confidentially, Elminster is spelled wrong in the heading), Aulstaer Mrelgaunt is shown wearing three rings (a *ring of protection +2,* a *ring of wizardry I,* and a *ring of wizardry III*) and receiving the bonuses from all three. He can only be wearing two rings according to the Magical Items section of the DMG. I just thought I'd bring these to your attention.

Shannon Carl • State College, PA

That sneaky Elminster is always slipping a little disinformation into his reports on the lands of Faerûn. He says it's to keep adventurers guessing, but we see now that he likes to keep gamers on their toes, too. We'll take it up with him next time we spell his name correctly, but more importantly, we'll be more careful when looking at characters with multiple magic rings.

Join us next month for a trip to the Outer Planes, an awesome new prestige class, some new psionics feats, and a great new story by Neal Barrett, Jr. Until then, keep those cards and emails coming, and hang out with us at www.wizards.com for message board and chat room discussions. D

Nodwick
GREETINGS, HENCHMAN! I AM CLARET COPIN, BARD OF RENOWN! YOU GO ON ADVENTURES WITH A BOLD HERO OR THREE, YES?
UM, FOR THE MOST PART...
GOOD! I SEEK TO COMPOSE A NEW BALLAD OF COURAGE, VICTORY AND GLORY! A STORY IN SONG TO CAPTURE THE HEART AND STIR THE SOUL!
SO TELL ME, MASTER...?
NODWICK.
MASTER NODWICK! HAVE YOU AND YOUR HEARTY BAND BEEN ADVENTURING AS OF LATE?
YES. WE GOT BACK INTO TOWN AN HOUR AGO.
EXCELLENT! AND WHAT VALIANT DEEDS DID YOUR EMPLOYERS DO?
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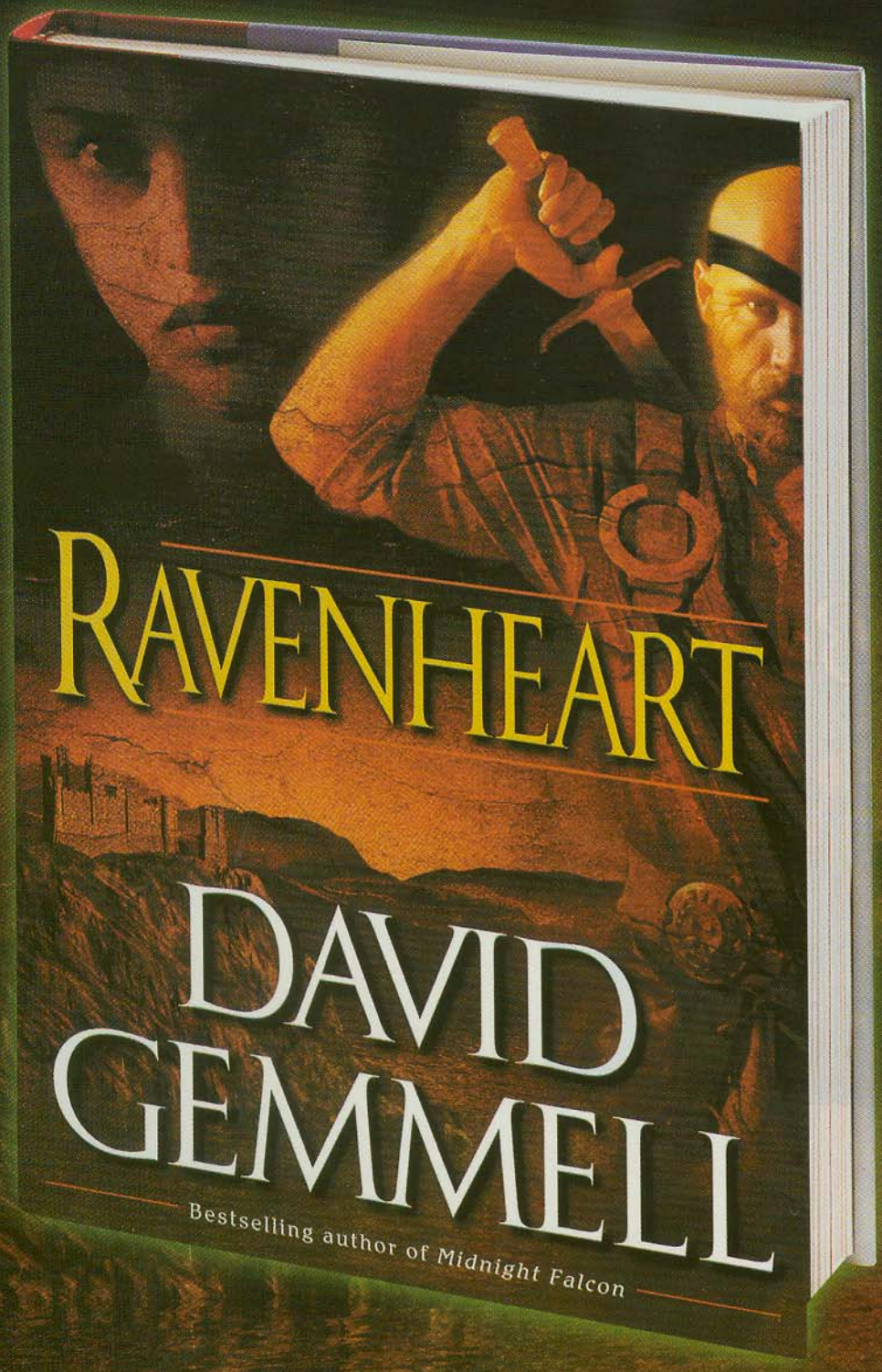

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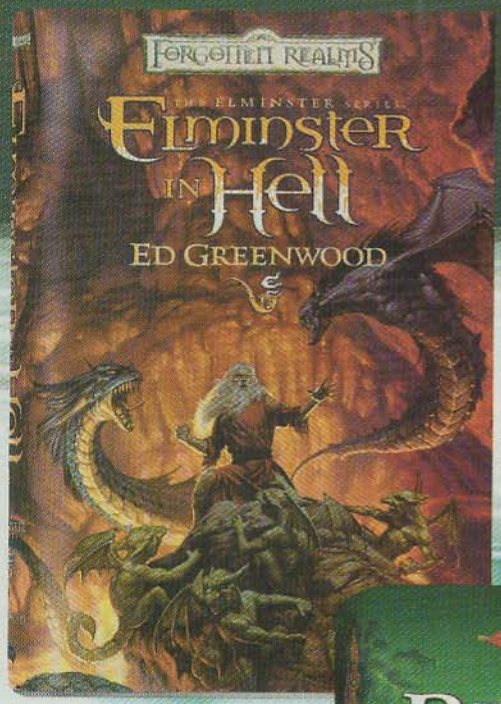

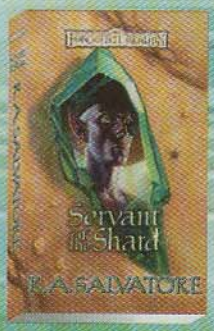

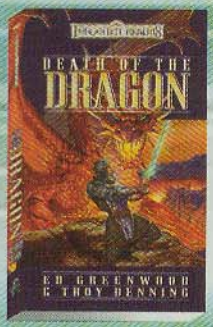

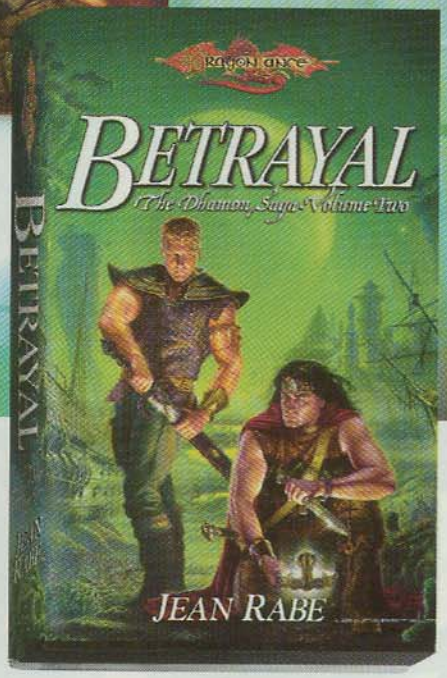

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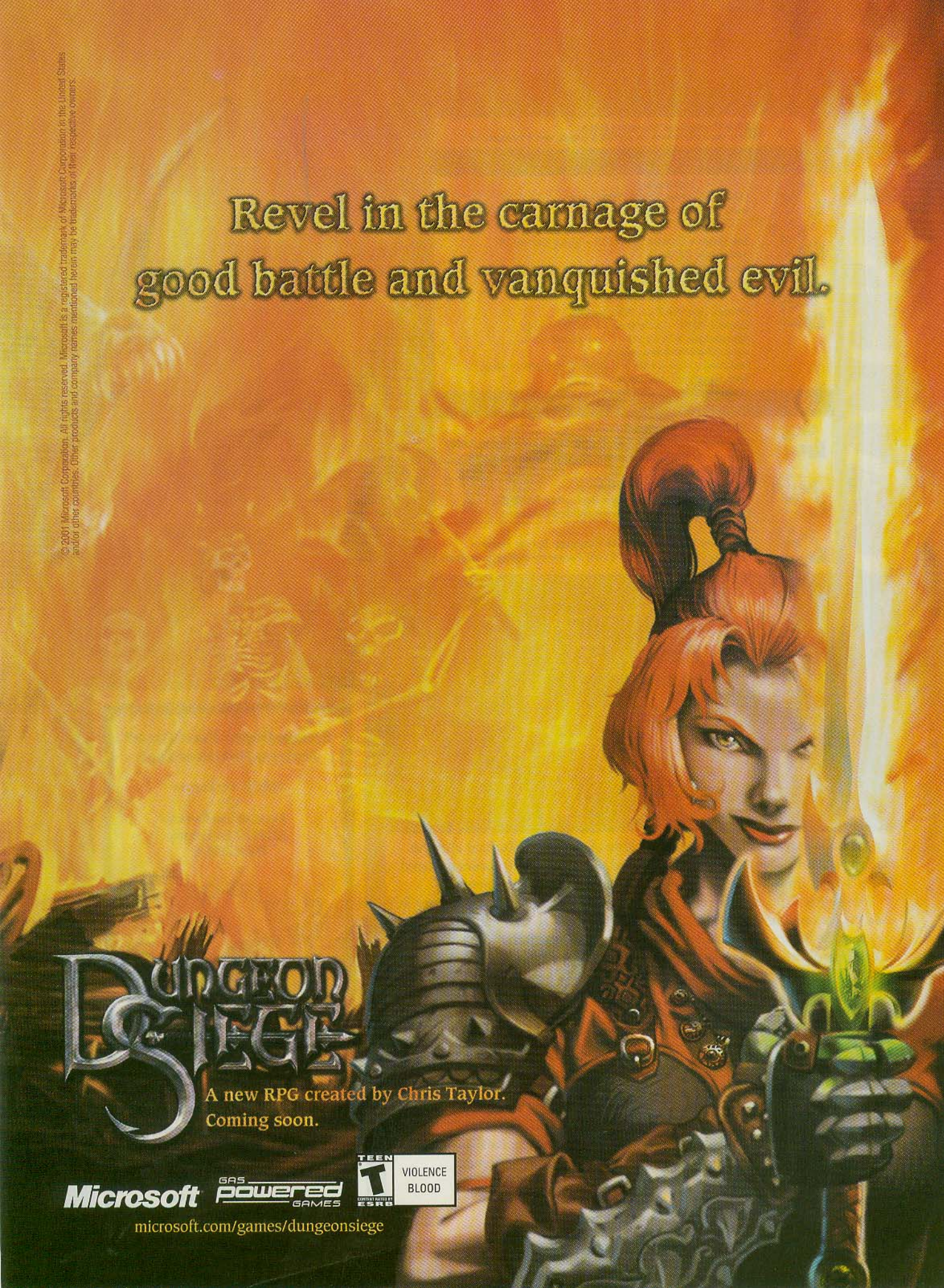
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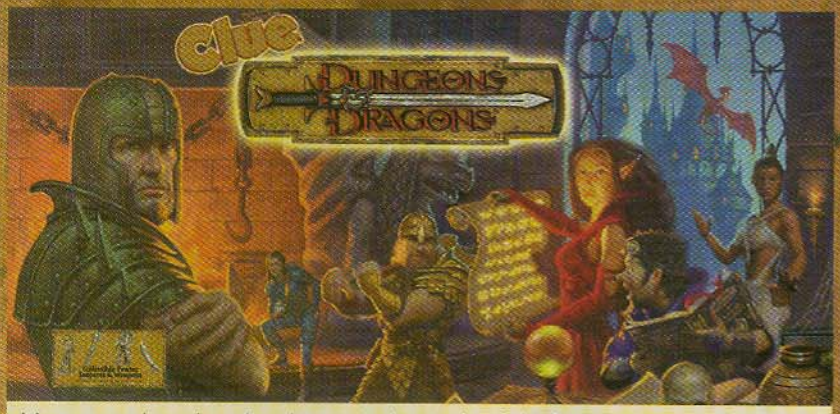

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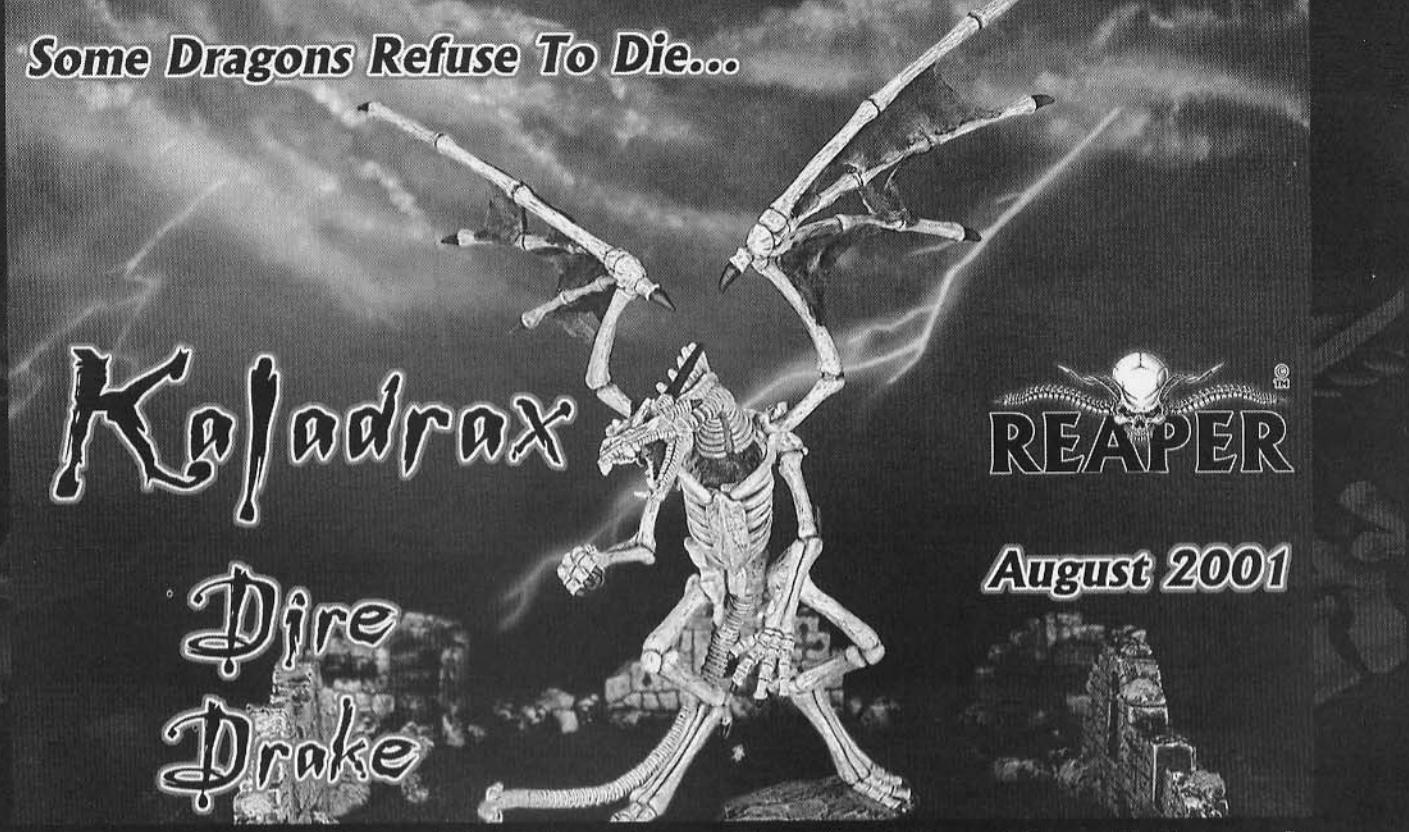

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UP ON A SOAPBOX

THE FINAL WHAT THE HECK IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

by Gary Gygax

When the numbers are totaled and the results examined, it is natural to ask whether you agree with the ratings or not, and what is the single most important element of a roleplaying game? In fact, all of the elements are critical to making a complete roleplaying game. From system to system, however, some are more critical than others. Similarly, depending on the designer's aims and the genre of the game, various elements will be necessary, others included to broaden vistas, and some hardly included.

For example, in an action-based fantasy roleplaying game **Business** will likely not be included in the rules, although the DM is free to add such consideration to the campaign. In a game based on another genre, such as Victorian horror or the Wild West, it is likely that this element will play a role in the game system.

Economics, another rather lowly rated element in the survey, is likely a critical consideration for roleplaying games not in the fantasy genre or those based mainly on individual action-adventure. When moving from purely tactical play into higher level considerations, Economics should certainly play an important part in the game.

Although it seems likely that the vast majority of respondents were D&D players, the solid but not over-blown 6+ ratings given to **Combat** and **Exploration** gave me assurance that there is a fine understanding of how much more there is to the game than simply looking for things to kill.

That **Politics** ranked far lower with relatively new players as compared to more experienced players seemed apropos. After all, when first learning to play, the nuisances this element adds aren't likely to have been discovered and appreciated.

Story rang the bell across the board. Evidently some respondents wanted to make sure that this element covered player participation. Quite a number of added comments for a 17th element had to do with this matter. Unless the players are contributing to the course of events, in effect co-creating the story through their characters' interaction with the environment, there is no roleplaying game. Without such an affect, the players are actors following a script. In a roleplaying game, the story is fully known only after the adventure has been played out.

What surprised me greatly was the low esteem given to **Theatrics**. How can a game be animated, exciting, and entertaining without such input from the DM? The most acclaimed DMs are those able to supply a full range of voices, sound effects, and other theatrical additions to play. This is a very important element of every sort of roleplaying game, although it isn't quantified in core rules. Perhaps had I named the element "Imagery, Visual Aids, and Theatrics" it would have conveyed the concept more clearly.

About a third of the respondents added a 17th element to the list. **Entertainment/Fun** was consistently mentioned and rated at 10; so too was **Camaraderie/Friends**. Were these elements of a roleplaying game rather than a result of playing one, both would top the list!

Most of the commonly added considerations were of like sort, or else simply adjunctive to the group's enjoyment of the game. **Snacks** and **Drinks** were popular additions. Many other suggested additions to the list dealt with the creation of adventures for the base game and the interaction between the participants when involved thus. All are valid, but only in relation to the play group, not the game form per se. Many like additions were of rather contradictory nature, such as those naming **Teamwork** opposing others calling for **Character Opposition**.

Story elements were added as factors by a considerable number of persons—**Drama**, **Humor**, **Mystery**, **Romance**, and **Tragedy**. While not separate from the **Story** element, it is worth stressing these facets. Especially noteworthy is **Humor**, as this element serves to both break from and then enhance the main aspects likely in the story. I'd like to thank all the respondents but especially those who called my attention to what I overlooked in the way of valid inclusions in the list. Here are these additions as I see them:

- **Environment** for the game that suits its genre and that includes within it both a **Sense of Wonder** and **Danger**. This means that the game setting is indeed a part of the core material. Using the averages for the sixteen elements originally suggested, I rate this one as a strong 7.
- **Rewards System** so that the active character advances in various ways by gaining belongings, knowledge, various increased capacities, and so forth. In a game without a winner, sans conclusion, this is certainly a key element! Again basing my rating on the averages for the 16 elements originally suggested, this one must also be a strong 7.

With 18 elements of the roleplaying game form before us, I think there's more than enough on the plate for creators of such things to ponder. Hopefully, the array will also enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the game's marvelous scope and diversity for all participants. What is clear is that the roleplaying game—beloved by its millions of fans—is a multi-faceted entertainment vehicle that enables people with diverse likes to enjoy the basic vehicle through its highly adaptable portions.

Concluding with this topic at last, I invite you to read next month's column in which I take a totally new and different tack. No hints. You'll have to discover what's been brewed up. D

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EXCITEMENT...
EXHAUSTION...
FATIGUE...
CURIOUS ODORS...
FUNNY ACCENTS...

NO, IT'S **NOT** THE AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK. IT'S

A GAMING CONVENTION.

IT'S...

OUT GAME OUTPLAY

GENCON SURVIVOR

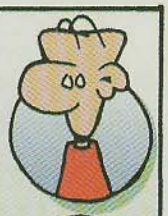
WELCOME TO MILWAUKEE

OUT OF MONEY

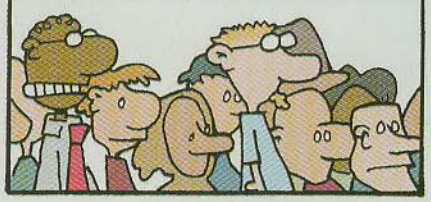
FOUR GAMERS

FOUR DAYS

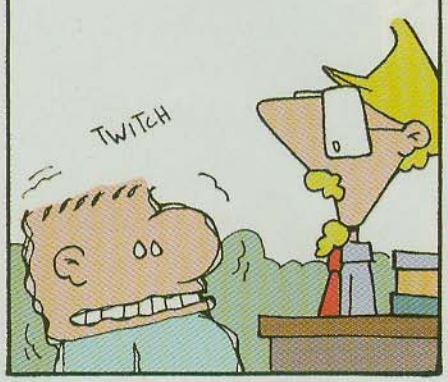
ANY SURVIVORS?

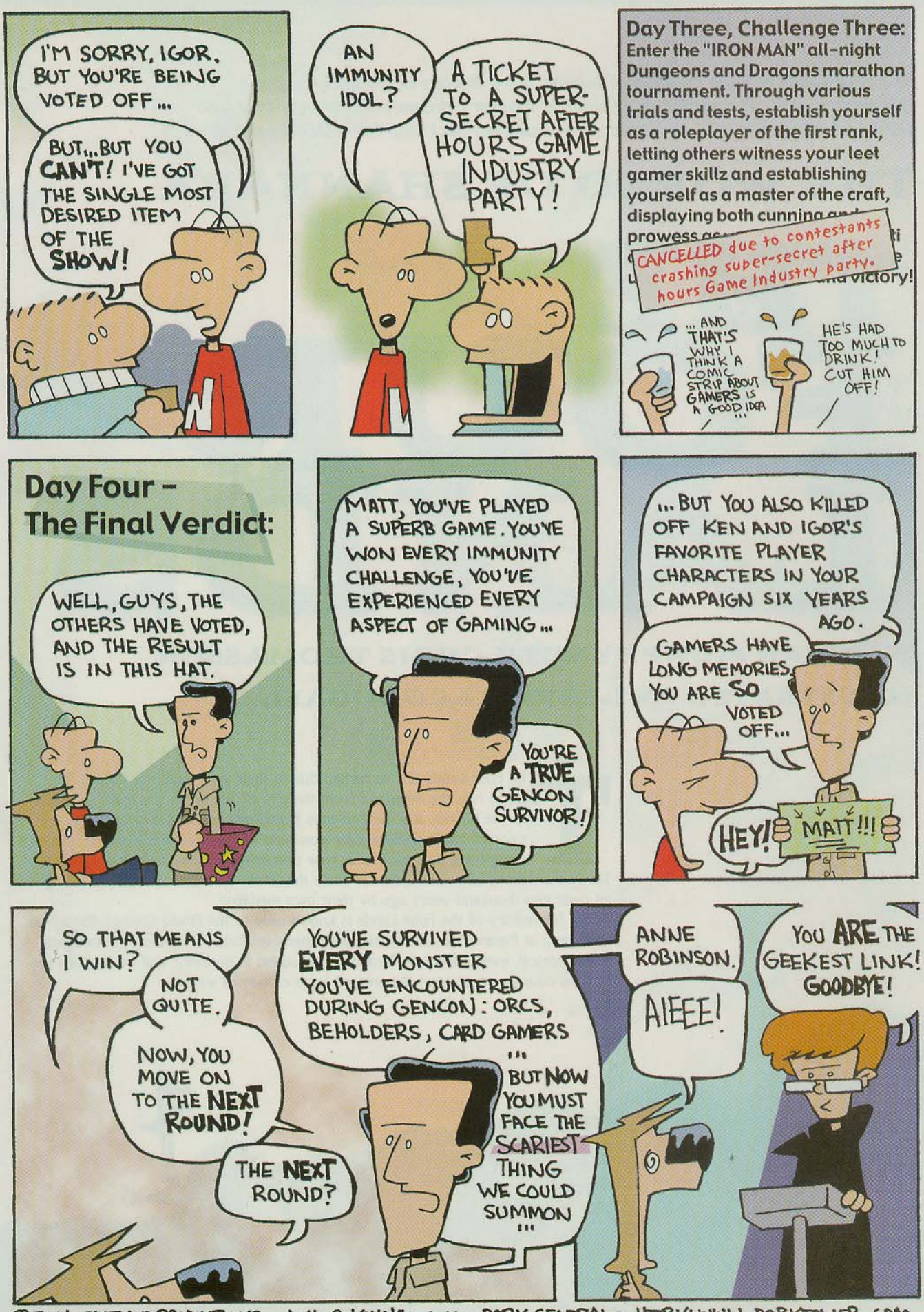


Day One, Challenge One:
Get through the registration line as quickly as possible.



Day Two, Challenge Two:
Resist telling anyone in the dealer's room about your latest player character for as long as you possibly can.




I'M SORRY, IGOR. BUT YOU'RE BEING VOTED OFF...
BUT...BUT YOU CAN'T! I'VE GOT THE SINGLE MOST DESIRED ITEM OF THE SHOW!
AN IMMUNITY IDOL?
A TICKET TO A SUPER-SECRET AFTER HOURS GAME INDUSTRY PARTY!
Day Three, Challenge Three:
Enter the "IRON MAN" all-night Dungeons and Dragons marathon tournament. Through various trials and tests, establish yourself as a roleplayer of the first rank, letting others witness your leet gamer skillz and establishing yourself as a master of the craft, displaying both cunning
CANCELLED due to contestants crashing super-secret after hours Game Industry party.
... AND THAT'S WHY I THINK A COMIC STRIP ABOUT GAMERS IS A GOOD IDEA
HE'S HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK! CUT HIM OFF!
Day Four - The Final Verdict:
WELL, GUYS, THE OTHERS HAVE VOTED, AND THE RESULT IS IN THIS HAT.
MATT, YOU'VE PLAYED A SUPERB GAME. YOU'VE WON EVERY IMMUNITY CHALLENGE, YOU'VE EXPERIENCED EVERY ASPECT OF GAMING...
YOU'RE A TRUE GENCON SURVIVOR!
...BUT YOU ALSO KILLED OFF KEN AND IGOR'S FAVORITE PLAYER CHARACTERS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN SIX YEARS AGO.
GAMERS HAVE LONG MEMORIES. YOU ARE SO VOTED OFF...
HEY!
MATT!!!
SO THAT MEANS I WIN?
NOT QUITE.
NOW, YOU MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ROUND!
THE NEXT ROUND?
YOU'VE SURVIVED EVERY MONSTER YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED DURING GENCON: ORCS, BEHOLDERS, CARD GAMERS ... BUT NOW YOU MUST FACE THE SCARIEST THING WE COULD SUMMON ...
ANNE ROBINSON.
AIEEE!
YOU ARE THE GEEKEST LINK! GOODBYE!
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The Four Lands are the creation of author Terry Brooks in his wildly popular Shannara novels. The setting is a Dungeon Master's dream come true, a vast land filled with danger, magic, and adventure: a perfect backdrop for a D&D campaign.

THE WORLD OF SHANNARA

THE FOUR LANDS

BY BRIAN MURPHY WITH CHRIS THOMASSON

ILLUSTRATED BY LARRY MACDOUGALL

The Four Lands are so named due to their geographic divisions. The elves rule the Westland from the city of Arborlon, the trolls lay claim to the barren and mountainous Northland, and the dwarves and gnomes battle endlessly for dominion of the Eastland. Mankind, once the globe's dominant race, now precariously clings to the Southland. The humans have been divided ever since the Great Wars, an apocalypse brought on over two thousand years ago by their own meddling.

The full history of the Four Lands is known only to the Druid Council, for within their keep at Paranor lies the most comprehensive library of tomes, both magical and historical, ever collected. Paranor is shrouded in mystery, and no one has yet had the courage to demand the ancient texts contained within.

Major Cities

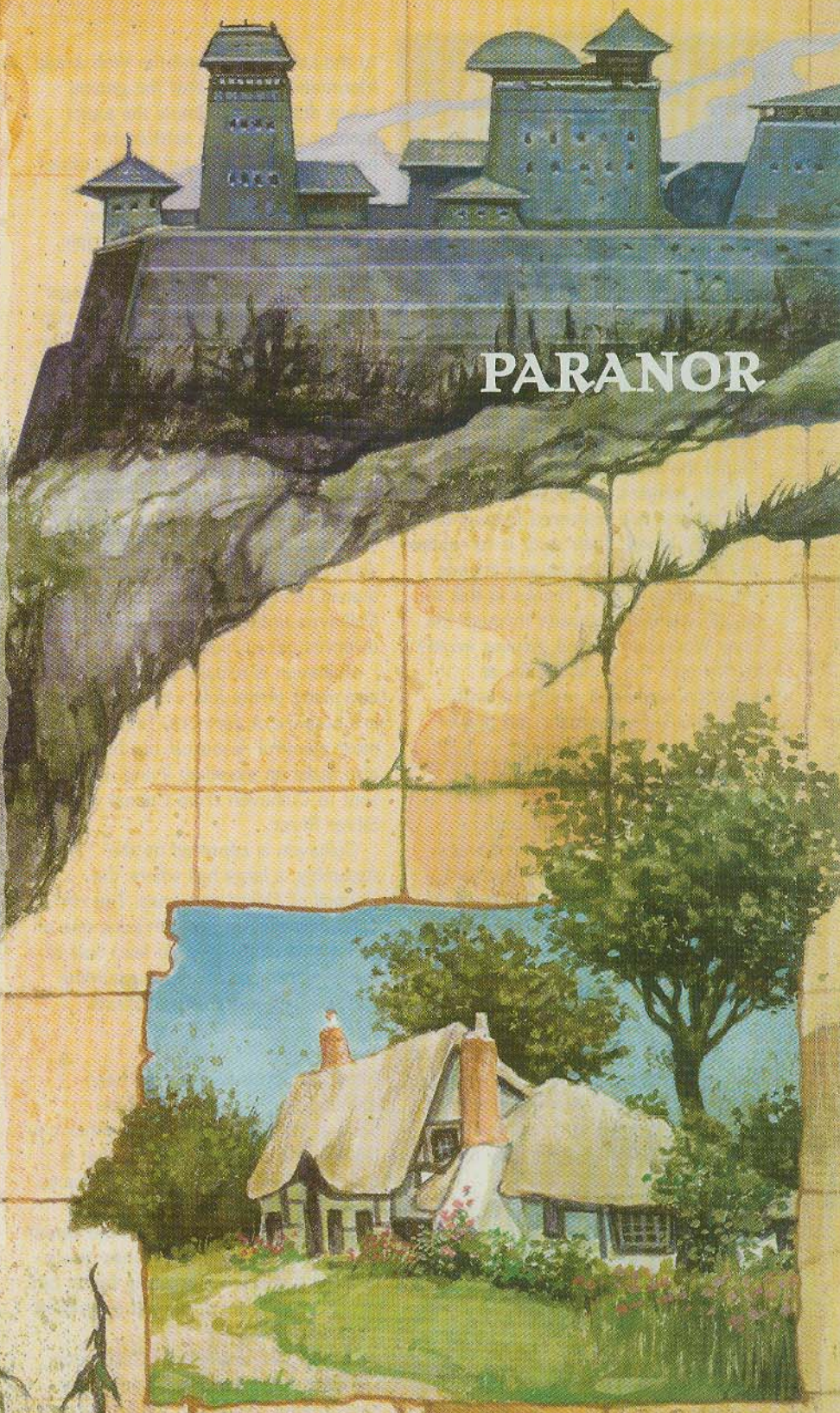
Arborlon

The capital city of the elven kingdom, Arborlon is perhaps the most aesthetically pleasing of all the great cities in the Four Lands. Defended on the southern and eastern sides by the seemingly endless Drey Wood, the city has never fallen to invasion despite multiple sieges during the last several centuries. The age of the city is unknown, and no record of its construction exists. Many believe the foundations were grown from the earth in the days when the elves' blood ran thick with powerful magic.

The elven nation is a monarchy ruled by the Elessedil family. The Breakline Mountains to the north, the Valley of Rhenn to the east, the Rockspur Mountains to the south, and Hoare flats to the west mark the kingdom's borders. Six advisors give the king or queen counsel, each of whom oversees an aspect of the nation's welfare (military, economic, diplomatic, and so on). Arborlon is the elves' only true city, although there are many small towns and villages dotting the countryside.

The city is centered around the Gardens of Life where the ancient Ellcrys tree rests, warding the Four Lands against the demon hordes trapped within the Forbidding. Just outside the silver gates surrounding the garden sits the royal manor house where the monarchs reside, protected by the Home Guard.

Archers man the city walls, and a barracks hunkers near the only gate into the city. The gate is guarded by a reinforced oak door and an iron portcullis. On either side of the gate is a tower manned by five archers. The elven



PARANOR

Hearthstone

In the central Westland lies the home of the ancient Druid Cogline and his moor cat companion Rumor. Walker Boh also lived here for a time while trying to escape his fate as the next Druid. A haven of peace, Hearthstone was burnt to the ground by Cogline himself in a desperate attempt to fend off a shadowen attack.

THE HOME GUARD

The Home Guard is an elite branch of the elven military, dedicated to defending the king and royal family. They are all fighters of 6th level. Each is equipped with a *+2 mithril shirt*, both a *cloak of elvenkind* and *boots of elvenkind*, and *a +1 longsword*. A home guard squad is composed of ten guards and a captain of 8th level. Captains have standard equipment, but their weapons are *+2 longswords*, and they also have *+1 daggers*. At least one home guard squad, and usually two or three in wartime, defends the king. There are fifty standard members of the Home Guard, and replacements are chosen from the ranks of the elven military.

infantry can be equipped at the barracks and at the gate in five minutes should the alarm be raised.

Elven hunters, a special branch of the military, are scattered throughout the Drey Wood. Their duty is to report any non-elven presence and impede any invading forces. Thanks to this tactic, all attempts to invade through the Drey Wood have failed. Armies invading through the Wood arrive at Arborlon weakened and tired, with much of their equipment and provisions destroyed.

Culhaven

The only dwarven city not underground, Culhaven lies on the Silver River at the northernmost point of the Lower Anar forests. The city lacks walls but it does not need them. No one, save the dwarves, knows the Anar Forest well enough to get through unscathed.

A council of eight elders rules the dwarven nation. The eldest is known as the First Speaker and acts as the head of the council. The dwarven nation is not known to have other settlements above the ground, but they lay claim to the Lower Anar and the Wolfsktaag Mountains, a claim that the gnome tribes dispute. Few know the exact number of dwarven settlements beneath the ground, but it is rumored that in times of need Culhaven can call enough reinforcements from below to double, and possibly triple, its military might.

Should Culhaven ever be in danger of invasion, every member of the population evacuates the city using underground tunnels. Once the hostile threat has passed through the abandoned city, the remaining dwarven army resurfaces and does what it can to break the enemy using ambushes and other guerrilla tactics. The Council of Elders never makes this decision lightly as it isn't always successful. This tactic proved disastrous against the forces of the human Federation, which remained in Culhaven until starvation forced the dwarves out of hiding.

Culhaven is usually a peaceful place, and many of the folk who live there are hunters or farmers. Timber is their most plentiful resource, but blacksmiths also make an excellent living using iron sent to Culhaven from Capaal via the Silver River.

Culhaven is centered on the Assembly, a large hall where the Council of Elders convenes. The city's defenders stay in two barracks, one on either side of the city. At least half of these guards are always out hunting and scouting in the Anar Forests.

Tyrsis

Although Tyrsis had not yet been founded by the beginning of the Second War of the Races, no other city played such a crucial role in what is now called the Third War of the Races. Capital of the human nation of Callahorn, Tyrsis stands near the center of the Four Lands. The city has never fallen in battle to an invading force, but the Federation occupied and controlled it for some time.

The Border Legion was Callahorn's famed army, which consisted of the best-trained soldiers in the Four Lands. Callahorn took upon itself the duty of defending the Southland against invasion, a duty that many took for granted. Balinor Buckhannah, the final king of Callahorn, died a few years after the Third War of the Races. He left Callahorn in the hands of nobles far less concerned with the fate of their neighbors. The Border Legion was disbanded, and an isolationist policy now means that Callahorn rarely involves itself in the problems of its once-allies.

A group of nobles rules the kingdom. They reside at the former royal palace in Tyrsis where anyone with enough coin can gain an audience. These nobles are more concerned with keeping their own coffers full of gold than with the well being of the Four Lands. Thanks to this new form of government, Tyrsis is more a merchant city than a place of great political power.

Tyrsis has the most impressive military defense of all the cities in the Four Lands. It is surrounded on all sides by mighty stone walls and towers. The walls of the city are twenty feet high and two and a half feet thick. There is a tower every fifty feet, each containing five footmen and five archers. Three archers patrol the battlements of each fifty-foot stretch of wall. Steel doors and an iron portcullis guard each of the gatehouses at the north and south of the city. Tyrsis has never fallen to invasion.

There are four barracks situated throughout the city, each housing over five hundred men. Prior to the disbandment of the Border Legion, there were an additional ten barracks in operation. These buildings have been converted into storehouses, and a few have been sold to mercenary companies seeking more luxurious accommodations. At the center of the city is the royal palace, where the four ruling nobles of Callahorn reside. Although elves and dwarves reside in Tyrsis, immigration is not encouraged. As a result, the racial districts of Tyrsis have become smaller and smaller as generations pass. The elven and dwarven districts maintain markets where exotic materials can be acquired.

The dwarven army does what it can to break the enemy using

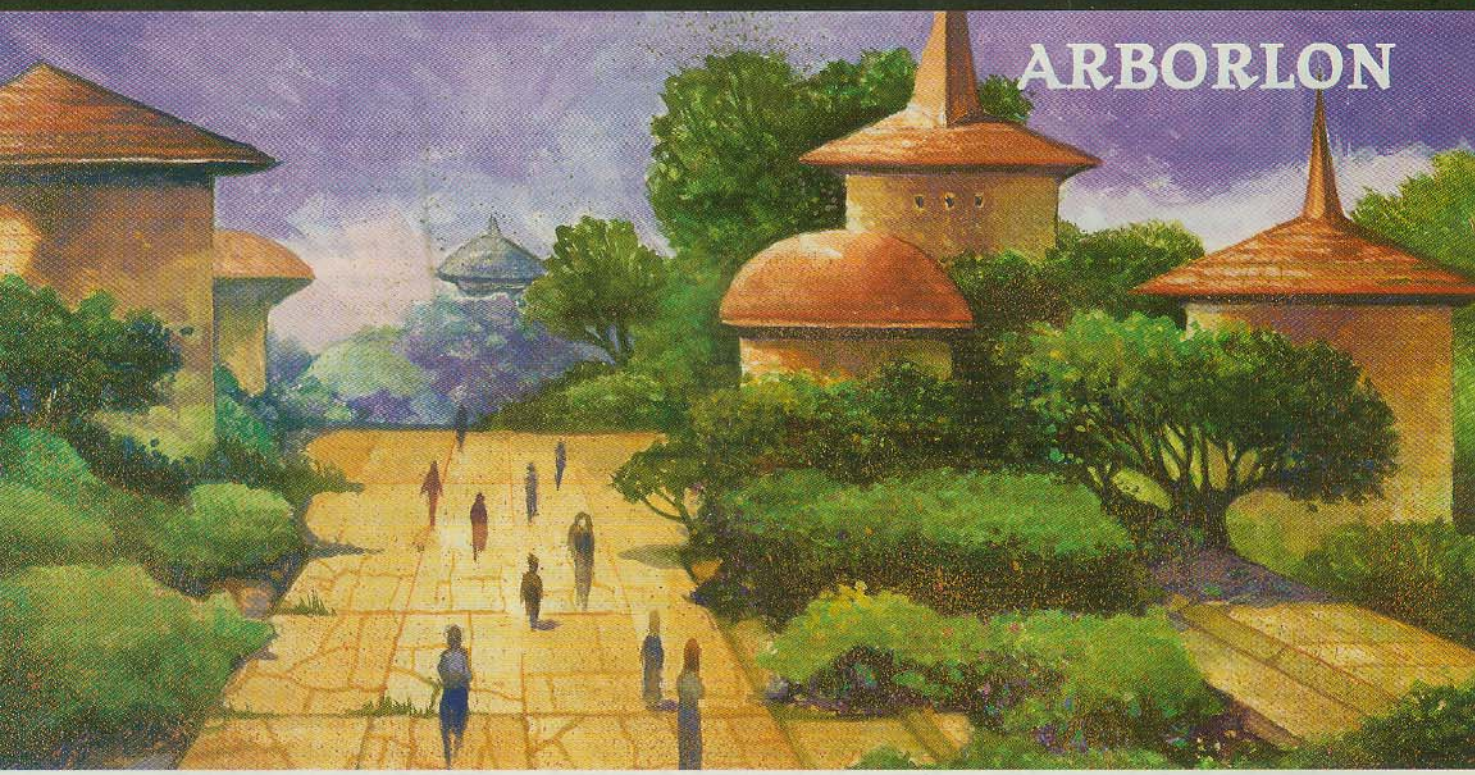
AMBUSHES and other GUERRILLA TACTICS.

Towns and Villages

Kern

Kern is a large town that lies upon the Mermidon River. The city's economy is based upon the Mermidon; the town is filled with fishermen. Kern owes allegiance to Tyrsis and is part of the kingdom of Callahorn. The town trades with both Tyrsis and Leah.

Kern has been attacked just once in



the last few centuries, during the Third War of the Races. Should it ever be attacked again, the townsfolk will use the same defensive strategy as before. The town breaks several dams along the Mermidon, flooding the banks and slowing an approach to the city. While the hostile force is delayed, the town evacuates its entire population to Tyrsis.

Leah

Leah, a small city-state near the lowlands of Clete, has been independent for over two hundred years, although it was under occupation at the height of Federation power. The city is fairly small compared to Tyrsis or Arborlon, but it has a strong economy based on farming and livestock.

Leah trades with both Kern and Shady Vale, and it has close ties with both communities. The small military of Leah is nothing compared to that of Tyrsis, but the proud fighting force of men and women are gladly willing to die in defense of their homeland. The city is not walled.

Shady Vale

This small hamlet is surrounded on all sides by the Duln forest. The hamlet's primary source of income is the lumber industry, but they also hunt the forests for wild game.

Shady Vale is a proud community, and it is surprisingly well protected against invasion. After the disbanding of the Border Legion, many soldiers retired to Shady Vale and now act as hunters. In times of war, these hunters double as a militia. There are roughly fifty such men, all trained with the bow and spear. The lack of defensive walls means that should a large enough force attempt to invade the Vale, there is little the militia could do save slow them down.

Storlock

In contrast to their warlike brethren, the gnomes of Storlock have forsaken violence and are the greatest healers in the Four Lands. The fact that they will heal anyone, be he hero or villain, is likely the only reason why they have never been invaded, as the pacifists will not take up arms, even in self-defense. There are no walls around Storlock, and the entire community is based around the large infirmary at the center of the village.

Wing Hove

The elves of Wing Hove have remained isolated since they left the elven kingdom of Arborlon centuries ago. The small town is completely self-sufficient. The Blue Divide offers more than enough fish, and the nearby mountains are filled with iron. The town is also close to a series of roc caves, and many of the massive birds have been trained to carry riders. Few know the exact location of Wing Hove, but many know of their elite Wing Riders as they aided in the defense of Arborlon during the Demon Wars. Since the fall of the Federation, Wing Hove has re-aligned itself with the elven crown.

Varfleet

Located less than ten miles from Tyrsis, the large town of Varfleet is little more than an outpost, providing advanced warning of an invasion from the northeast. Varfleet is walled and has a decent force manning the walls. The town's economy is based on the silver found in the mountains of Runne. This town is also rumored to be the birthplace of Allanon. Older than Tyrsis, Varlfeet now owes allegiance to Callahorn.

Other Places of Interest

Capaal

This ancient dwarven fortress sits on the Silver River, where it joins with the Cillidellan. The fortress was constructed in the time of Raybur, last of the dwarven kings. The fortress protects the dams that regulate the flow of the Silver River, preventing flooding from washing Culhaven away. The fortress is nearly a millennia old, and it is defended by 500 dwarven soldiers. The fortress also defends a fairly rich

The HADESHORN'S WATERS

Contact poison, Fortitude save (DC 25); initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution, secondary damage is death.

Undead and Constructs are immune to the Hadeshorn's deadly waters, as non-living creatures have nothing to fear from such close contact with the realm of the spirits. Other creatures that are normally immune to poison are *not* immune to the Hadeshorn's effects. Creatures foolishly bathing in the Hadeshorn's waters suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to their Fortitude saves against the Hadeshorn's poison.

iron mine. Iron is ferried to Culhaven on the Silver River once a month.

Graymark

The mord wraiths used this ancient troll fortress as a base of operations during the Time of the Walkers. Since their defeat, no one has had the courage to venture into the abandoned fortress due to the dark magic that many believe still lies within. After the destruction of the Ildatch, the fortress is under a permanent *unhallow* effect. Should the mord wraiths ever resurface, they will likely attempt to retake Graymark.

Grimpond

The Grimpond is actually a shade that inhabits an unnamed lake north of Hearthstone in the Westland. The Grimpond claims to be a creature as old as faerie, but no one truly knows. Whatever its origin, the Grimpond has the ability to divine mysteries hidden from mortals. However, the Grimpond is a malicious spirit that must be tricked into revealing useful information. It delights in tormenting those who visit it with all the powers of illusion and divination at its disposal.

Paranor

Paranor, a place filled with the knowledge of the ancients, was once the home to the Druid Council. Galaphile, an elven wizard who decided that only learning could guide the inhabitants of the Four Lands to peace and prosperity, established the Council. The Druids were well versed in both magic and the ancient sciences, and they worked to unite the five races of the Four Lands. Unfortunately, the Druids themselves were not immune to corruption, and eventually they lost interest in anything outside their keep. All but a handful of Druids were wiped out during the Second War of the Races.

The keep was destroyed, but only temporarily. During the Time of the Walkers, Allanon became aware that his death was not far off. To make certain that the multitude of magical resources in Paranor would not fall into the hands of those who would use them to subjugate the Four Lands, he activated the ancient magics at the heart of the fortress. The keep simply disappeared, until Walker Boh, the last Druid, used his magic to bring Paranor back. Any characters planning to restore the Druid Council will likely want access to Paranor itself, which presents dozens of adventure opportunities.

Pykon

This elven fortress's garrison was massacred during the Demon Wars by a particularly powerful demon, known only as the Reaper. After the Demon Wars ended, the elven crown was far more concerned with rebuilding the towns and villages that were destroyed than with replacing garrisons in far away strongholds. Thus, Pykon lay empty for several decades before being reclaimed. Pykon is an excellent base of operations for a party that is doing work for the elven crown, especially work that requires them to venture into the Wilderun.

Silver River

The Silver River is a stream of sparkling blue water that feeds Rainbow Lake. According to legend, the river is ruled by the reclusive King of the Silver River, one of the few remaining faerie creatures in the Four Lands. He is said to help travelers in need, appearing to them in dreams and offering advice. The Silver River springs from Heaven's Well. It is an excellent place for any group to stop and rest, even when being pursued, as the King of the Silver River often shields people from their enemies wrath, at least temporarily. The King of the Silver River might protect good-aligned characters with spells like *improved invisibility, protection from evil,* and *non-detection.* On some occasions, the King of the Silver River will even use *teleport without error* to bring those in need to a safer location on the river.

Valley of Shale

The Valley of Shale is a dark valley avoided by most travelers. Although no visible dangers present themselves, many find that the place emits a disturbing aura, and those who sleep there frequently suffer terrifying dreams of death and horror. In game terms, anyone sleeping there is subject to a *nightmare* spell (with a DC 20 Will save) for each night they spend in the Valley of Shale.

The most remarkable and feared place in the Valley of Shale is the Hadeshorn, a body of murky green waters whose touch is poison. One droplet from the bubbling and spitting Hadeshorn can kill.

The Hadeshorn is one of the few focal points where the netherworld and the real world come into contact. Some say the dead can be contacted through the lake, provided a Scry check (DC 25) is made. Contacting the dead and understanding them, however, are two different things. The shades often speak in riddles and ominous visions that are difficult to decipher.

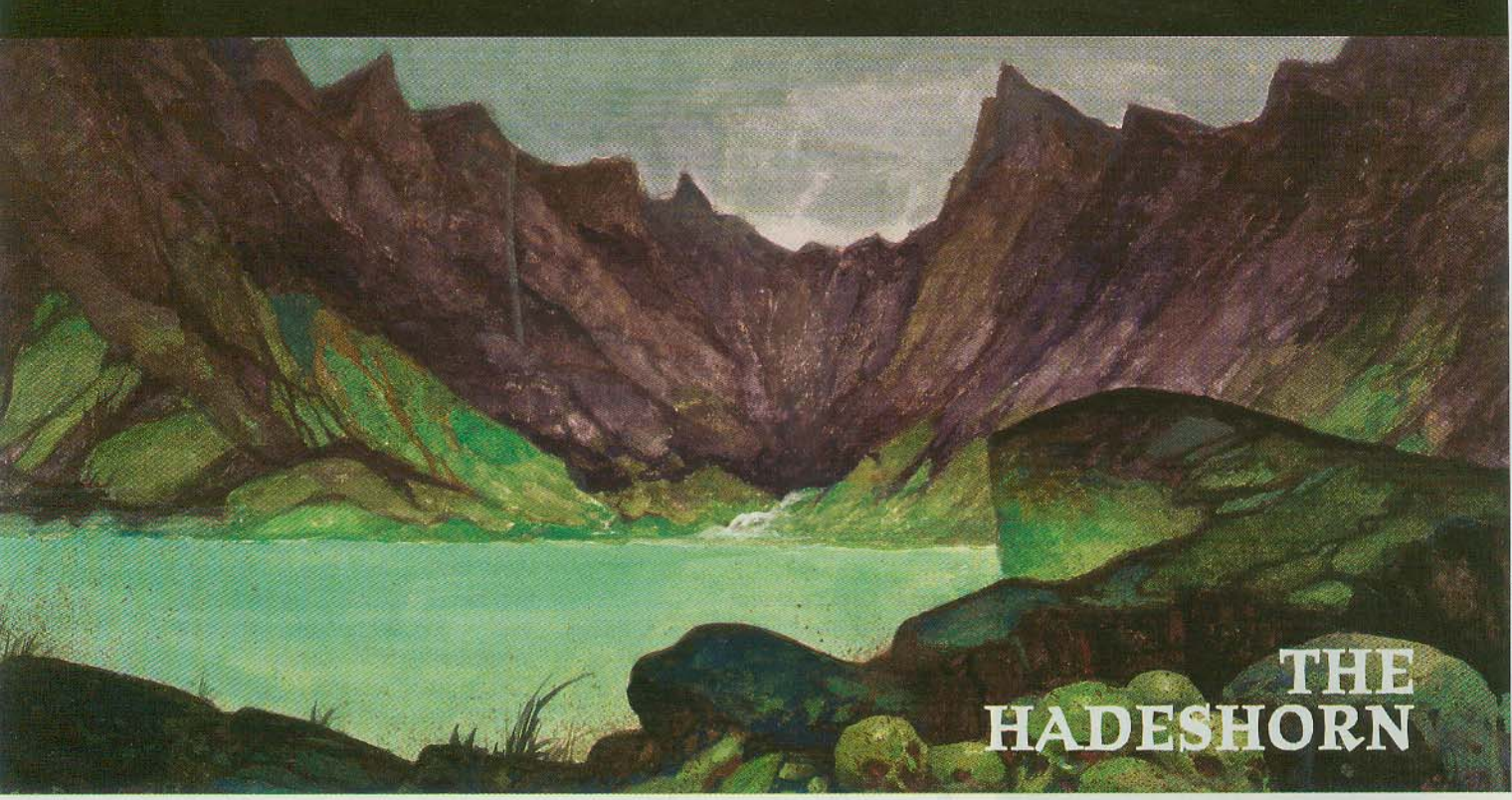
Wilderun

The Wilderun is a place of legend and fear. Riddled with swamps and jungles, less than a dozen hamlets and villages dot the massive region, and these small communities are filled with thieves and cutthroats. Monsters of every variety roam the area, and few people dare to travel there. For a period of two years, the brigands-turned-tyrants who operated out of Pykon forcibly united the many hamlets there, but their reign of terror ended when the elven crown retook Pykon.

At the center of the Wilderun lie the Hollows, a place where the witch sisters Morag and Mallenroh contend for supremacy. According to legend, deeper within the Hollows lies the mystical Bloodfire, a place where the Elemental Plane of Fire touches the Four Lands.

Those who sleep there frequently suffer

TERRIFYING DREAMS of DEATH and HORROR.



Ruins

Skull Kingdom

Skull kingdom was the demesne of the Warlock Lord, the base of operations from where he worked to overthrow those that opposed him. At the end of the Third War of the Races, the Warlock Lord was destroyed there. No one willingly goes to the Skull Kingdom, in fear of finding creatures that might have survived their master's destruction. The trip itself is dangerous, but the ruins of skull kingdom could easily contain magical wealth beyond imagining.

The Skull Kingdom is nearly impenetrable when occupied by an army. To the east is the Malg Swamp, which produces gases deadly to the anatomy of any living creature. The Malg feeds the River Lethe, which sweeps to the west below the intimidating Knife Edge Mountains, among whose peaks can be found Skull Mountain. To the west is the Kierlan Desert. The heat of this inhospitable land causes massive amounts of steam to rise off the lake formed by the outflow of the Lethe, cloaking this area in a toxic mist that kills creatures within seconds.

The Hall of Kings

The Hall of Kings was originally a temple created by an ancient cult of priests who worshiped the gods of death. Although classified as ruins, since the temple has remained vacant for over a millennium, the Hall of Kings is still in nearly perfect condition. There are many dangers within the Hall of Kings; most are unknown. Walker Boh was the last known individual able to traverse the Hall of Kings, though many others have tried.

Should someone successfully travel through the Hall of Kings, he will exit on the opposite side of the Dragon's Teeth Mountains.

PEOPLE of the FOUR LANDS

Class Options

Barbarians: The gnome tribes are the only barbarians that appear in any of the Shannara novels, but others could exist in isolated regions of the Four Lands. Barbarians are frequently the survivors of communities ruined by war, or they are the ancestors of such individuals. Forced into a savage life of pillaging, these people are rarely encountered outside the Wilderun.

Bards: These characters are well known throughout the Four Lands. Many are Rovers, a people that frequently travel in large wagon trains. Rovers are seen as dishonest thieves, and few people trust them. All Rovers who can be identified as such (by their style of dress, typically) suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks. Rovers often travel alone, but they can usually count on a wagon train to shelter them and their friends.

Cleric: Clerics are quite rare in the Four Lands, as the gods do not involve themselves in the matters of the Four Lands as often as the gods of other worlds. There are very few temples as many people identify temples with places of evil, such as the Hall of Kings. The few clerics that exist are in high demand and travel from place to place healing the sick and injured.

Druids: Normal D&D druids should not be confused with Allanon and the other members of the Druid Council. Characters of the druid class are quite rare and can be found most frequently among the barbarian tribes in the Wilderun.

Fighters: Fighters are common in the Four Lands. There is never a shortage of people who know how to use a blade. The Border Legion was the best example of a force of fighters, as every member was at least a 1st-level fighter.

Monks: Martial-artists exemplify the ultimate link between body and mind. Few men or women in the Four Lands possess the stamina or mental fortitude it takes to master the body. These individuals should be extremely rare and shrouded in mystery.

Paladins: Paladins are holy warriors who fight to make certain good triumphs over evil. These individuals are rare. Few people have the honor and

MAGIC in the FOUR LANDS

Magic is a powerful force in the Four Lands and consequently many people fear it. It has been the tool of many evil forces, such as the Warlock Lord and the shadowen.

There are two other forms of magic in the Four Lands. The *wishsong* is an amazingly powerful ability, which is detailed in the "Heroes & Villains" on page 45. The other magic is the magic of old science, the last practitioner of which was believed to be Cogline, an old man who died fighting the shadowen. The ancient sciences are based on strange alchemical processes, most of which have been lost.

Under the rule of the Federation, all use of magic was explicitly outlawed. Anyone even thought to be a practitioner of magic was hunted down by the Seekers, led by Rimmer Dall. Ironically, Rimmer Dall was actually a shadowen, a creature of magic himself. The Federation still outlaws magic in any form, but their influence has diminished as their control of the Four Lands has slipped drastically since the defeat of the shadowen by Walker, Wren Elessedil, and Par and Coll Ohmsford. As a result, travelers of the Four Lands could encounter magic in one form or another, especially if they travel near any one of the more unique locations to be found in the world (see Other Places of Interest).

sense of duty necessary to take up the mantle of the paladin. Those that do exist work quietly to better the world around them, pretending to be nothing more than fighters or rangers.

Rangers: Rangers are common throughout the Four Lands, especially in elven and dwarven lands. Living in the Anar Forest makes rangers a necessity for the dwarven people. Rangers also wander the Four Lands, sometimes offering their services as trackers, at other times simply seeking a good hunt.

Rogues: Extremely common in the Four Lands, rogues are present in nearly every community. Although some rogues are mere thieves, others offer their services as spies or assassins.

Sorcerers: These arcane spellcasters should be extremely rare, as innate magic is mostly a thing of the past in the Four Lands. Those individuals who have magic in their blood are usually the children of faerie creatures or dark monstrosities. Because of their heritage, sorcerers often find themselves outcasts.

Wizards: Wizards are likewise rare. Many are feared because of the great damage dark magic has wrought on the Four Lands. Those who know how to command magic would be well advised to hide the fact unless they are powerful enough to defend themselves from a mob of terrified townspeople.

There is never a shortage of people who know how to USE A BLADE.

Race Options

The races of the Four Lands are similar to those presented in the *Player's Handbook,* with the following changes:

Humans: Humans remain unchanged. They are still a diverse people who excel at learning and specialization.

Dwarves: Dwarves are similar in most regards to their D&D counterparts; however, their life on the surface of the world has made them somewhat different from the mining folk described in the *Player's Handbook.* The following changes should be made:

- Stonecunning grants a +1 racial bonus, not a +2 racial bonus.
- Dwarves gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Wilderness Lore checks.
- Dwarves gain a +1 racial bonus to attack gnomes.

Elves: The elves of Shannara should remain relatively unchanged; however, the rarity of magic means their favored class should be changed from wizard to ranger.

Gnomes: Gnomes are a vastly different people from those described in the *Player's Handbook.* They are warlike and savage. To reflect this, their favored class should be changed from illusionist to barbarian. Also the following racial changes should be made:

- Replace their attack bonus against goblinoids and kobolds with a +1 racial bonus to attack dwarves, due to centuries of border wars between the two races.
- Gnomes gain the Track feat for free.
- Gnomes gain a +2 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks.
- Gnomes lose their innate illusion abilities.

Half-Elves: Human-elf crossbreeds should remain unchanged. They are tolerated in both human and elven communities, though they are rarely truly accepted.

Other Races: Halflings and half-orcs do not appear anywhere in the Shannara series, but that doesn't necessarily mean they can't exist in your Four Lands campaign.

Halflings could easily be inserted into remote regions of the Four Lands; the Wilderun is a perfect example of a place where these nomadic people might never be found.

During the Demon Wars, the standard, lowly demon had no magical powers, merely ferocious combat ability. Half-orcs could take the place of the monsters from the Demons Underground adventure hook.

Also, look at "The Bestiary" this month for a new character race, the rock troll.

Adventure Hooks

These ideas can be turned into a series of adventures for a campaign set in the Four Lands. With a little work, they can be adapted for other campaign settings as well.

Ancient Relic

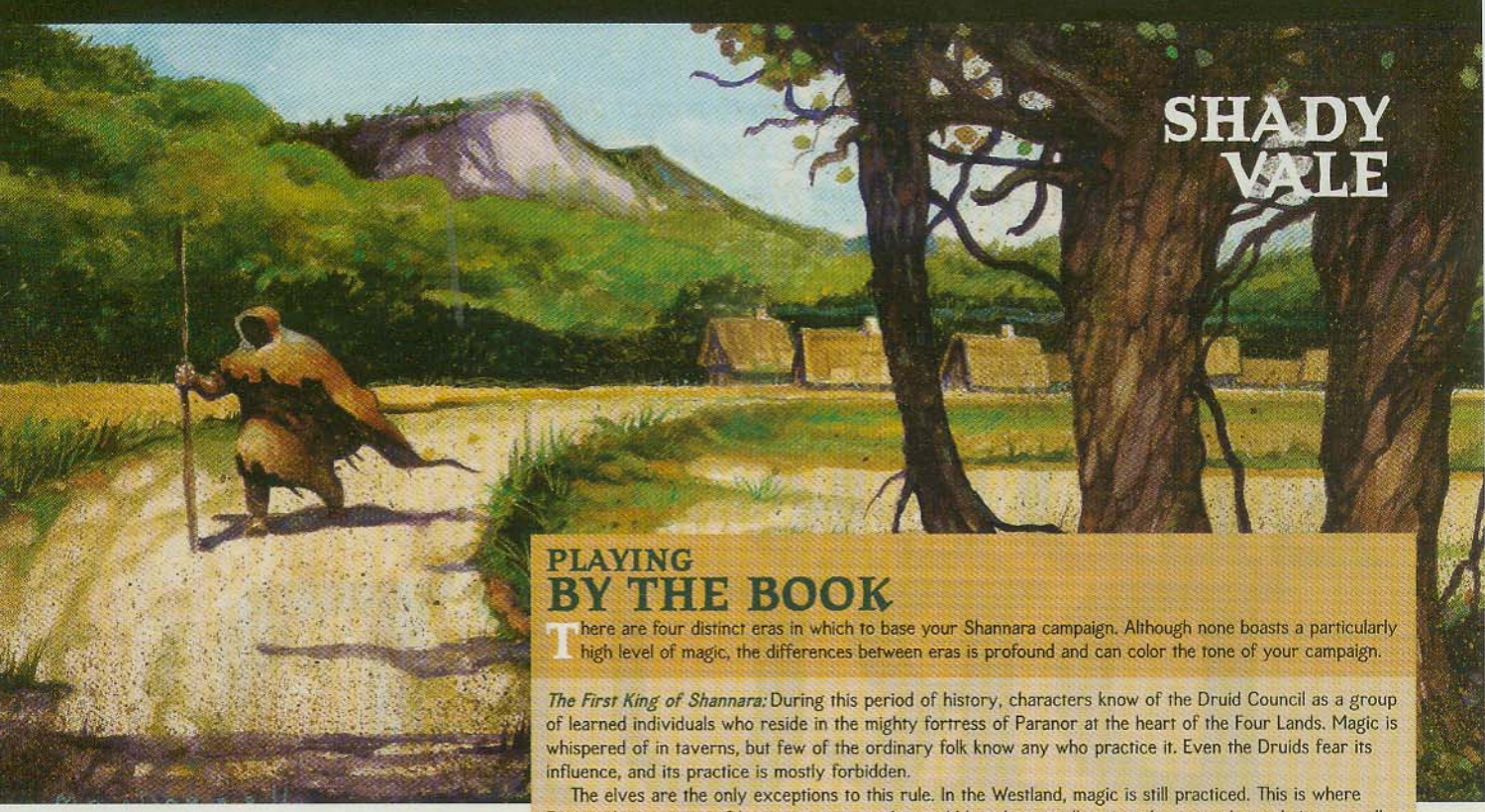
Rumors are abroad that a powerful relic lies in the Bloodfire, where Wil Ohmsford allegedly destroyed the monstrous Reaper. According to myth, a single claw is all that remains of the beast, and whoever holds the claw gains the Reaper's killing prowess. The gnomes and the Rovers have already set out for the Wilderun, hoping to claim the artifact first.

Border Wars

The war between the dwarves and gnomes has been revived. This time the gnomes are fighting more ferociously than ever before. The dwarves are in desperate straits, and they need seasoned adventurers capable of doing some scouting behind enemy lines. The only problem bigger than getting into gnome territory is getting back out.

Bounties Offered

The moor cat population is at an all-time high, and the beasts are beginning to leave Hearthstone in search of prey. Unfortunately, the cats are starving to death and haven't been too discriminating about what they eat.



SHADY VALE

More than a dozen people are missing from the town of Rooker Line, and bounty notices have been dispatched as far as Tyrsis offering rewards for moor cat pelts.

Demons Underground

During the Demon Wars, more than one village was overrun by the horde, which rampaged through everything in its path. The women the demons allowed to live suffered greatly. Now half-breed demons reside in the sewers beneath Tyrsis, while others raid the countryside. Regardless of where they are, these monsters must be stopped before they multiply and spread their taint further throughout the Four Lands.

Return of the Legion

The Border Legion, once the proudest fighting force in the Four Lands, has decided to re-form, with thousands of old soldiers coming out of retirement. This fighting force of aged and battle-hardened veterans has already besieged Tyrsis, intent on restoring Callahorn to its former militaristic glory. Conscripted by the rulers of Tyrsis, the party is sent to destroy as much of the legion's siege equipment as they can.

PLAYING BY THE BOOK

There are four distinct eras in which to base your Shannara campaign. Although none boasts a particularly high level of magic, the differences between eras is profound and can color the tone of your campaign.

The First King of Shannara: During this period of history, characters know of the Druid Council as a group of learned individuals who reside in the mighty fortress of Paranor at the heart of the Four Lands. Magic is whispered of in taverns, but few of the ordinary folk know any who practice it. Even the Druids fear its influence, and its practice is mostly forbidden.

The elves are the only exceptions to this rule. In the Westland, magic is still practiced. This is where Bremen learns many of his arcane arts, and it could be where spellcasting characters learn theirs, as well. The Southland is composed of many human kingdoms interspersed with independent communities, and the dwarves of the Eastland carry on their traditional way of life in the Anar Forests.

The opportunity for adventure is great, however, as the Warlock Lord stirs in the far north, massing his armies to strike at the unsuspecting lands to the south. The ancient Elder Druid Bremen gathers a group of steadfast individuals to battle the evil, and the PCs could easily become a part of what will become the Second War of the Races.

The Sword of Shannara, The Elfstones of Shannara, and *The Wishsong of Shannara:* These three books take place over roughly three human generations. Thus, the political climate stays mostly the same.

In this era, the Southland and Eastlands are relatively unchanged. The Elves to the West are still the only race who know of magic to any great extent, but much of the art has been lost, even to them. Although Callahorn is a monarchy at the beginning of this set of books, it has become a city ruled by petty nobles by its completion, making Leah the only surviving monarchy in the Southland.

The most significant change is at Paranor, where all the Elder Druids have vanished save one: Allanon. The wandering mystic travels the land recording history as it happens, and seeking signs that herald the return of the Warlock Lord.

Again, with the armies to the north about to strike, adventure is in the air. PCs might get caught up in the search for the *Sword of Shannara,* they might be embroiled in a war against the demons held beyond the Forbidding by the Ellcrys, or they might be sent by Allanon to dispatch mord wraiths and destroy that book of dark magic: the Ildatch.

The Scions of Shannara, The Druid of Shannara, The Elf Queen of Shannara, and *The Talismans of Shannara:* This third period of significance heralds the high point of Federation rule. The Federation arose in the deep Southland as a unification of several independent states. It then massed an army and started a march north, ostensibly to provide protection to those uncivilized lands—but in reality to conquer them.

Paranor has vanished from the face of the earth, leaving behind almost nothing to mark that it ever existed. Magic is forbidden everywhere, as the Federation, under the control of the evil shadowen, is promoting the belief that magic use causes corruption and evil to spread. All of the lands of the Southland and Eastland are under Federation control, and the elves have seemingly disappeared from the face of the earth.

Adventurers face the danger of the shadowen at every turn. They could be recruited to find the elves and bring them back to the Four Lands, solving the mystery of Paranor, or to find the *Sword of Shannara,* the now-lost symbol of freedom in the Four Lands.

The Voyage of the Jerle Shannara: The Ilse Witch (and forthcoming books): The most recent era in the epic saga of the Four Lands reveals many interesting things. The Federation has lost control of the Eastland, the Westland, and nearly all of the Southland, opposed as they are by the elves, dwarves, and the Free-born.

Paranor has returned and has an occupant: the reluctant Elder Druid, Walker. Much like Allanon, Walker walks the lands recording history and watching for signs of evil. However, Walker also harbors the goal of reestablishing the legendary Druid Council. In addition, Walker learns of an ancient magic across the Blue Divide: A seemingly impassable sea off the coast of the Westland. All the while, a misguided young girl, powerful beyond her years, plots to destroy Walker and claim the magic for herself.

The Four Lands have never been more exciting. The elves and dwarves fight the tyrannical Federation, Walker races the Ilse Witch to a far-off land to capture a magic that could change the world, and remarkable airships sail the skies.

Elder Druids are individuals who have been chosen to protect their world from war and darkness. Only the most knowledgeable are permitted entry into the Druid Council, and those who do must forsake all other loyalties in favor of the pursuit of peace.

The World of Shannara

ELDER DRUID

by Brian Murphy • illustrated by Jeremy Jarvis

Despite sharing a name, Elder Druids and typical D&D druids have almost nothing in common. Elder Druids are most often wizards or sorcerers, although fighters and bards occasionally take up the path. Paladins make excellent Elder Druids, but they are rare. Clerics seldom follow the path of the Elder Druid, as no Elder Druid can follow the doctrine of a particular god.

NPC Elder Druids are often wanderers, and most Elder Druids travel for long periods of time without the company of their brethren, seeking to learn more about the world at large. Almost all groups of Elder Druids obey a hierarchy, and their leaders spend most of their time focusing on avoiding major catastrophes. Elder Druids seek to maintain balance across the globe and prevent war, but they are not above fighting on the battlefield should the need arise.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Being an Elder Druid grants proficiency with all simple weapons, but not armor or shields.

Spells per Day: An Elder Druid continues training in magic. Thus, when a new Elder Druid level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that he adds the level of Elder Druid to the level of some other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

If the character had more than one spellcasting class before he became an Elder Druid, he must decide to which class he adds an Elder Druid level for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds each new level.

Communication: At 1st level, the Elder Druid can invoke *tongues* and *comprehend languages* on himself as the spells of the same name, at will. This is a spell-like ability.

Druid Fire: Once per day per two Elder Druid class levels, as a standard action, the Elder Druid can summon forth a plane of white hot flames similar to a *burning hands* spell. This attack takes the form of a 40-foot-long semicircular burst of fire that deals damage equal to 1d6 per Elder Druid class level plus the Elder Druid's Wisdom modifier. Creatures in the area of effect can make a Reflex save (DC 20 + the Elder Druid's Wisdom modifier) to take half damage. The fire can affect incorporeal and ethereal creatures, and spell resistance does not apply. This is a supernatural ability.

Sense Magic: At 3rd level, the Elder Druid can *detect magic* and *read magic* as the spells of the same name, at will. This is a spell-like ability.

Elder Druid Resistance: At 4th level, the Elder Druid's body becomes resistant to poison and disease. This results in a +4 resistance bonus to saving throws against poison and disease. This is an extraordinary ability.

Uncanny Dodge: At 1st level the

Elder Druid gains the extraordinary ability to react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. At 1st level and above, the Elder Druid retains his Dexterity bonus to AC regardless of being caught flat-footed or being struck by an invisible attacker.

At 5th level, the Elder Druid can no longer be flanked. He can react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as he can react to a single opponent. The exception to this defense is that a rogue who is 4 levels higher than the character can flank him (and thus sneak attack him).

Druid Sleep: At 7th level, the Elder Druid is taught how to enter Druid sleep, a form of magical hibernation that allows him to exceed his natural lifespan. A total of twenty-eight days out of the year must be spent in hibernation (assuming your year is around 365 days; adjust this duration to about 1/12 the length of the year in your campaign). Provided this ratio is maintained, the Elder Druid adds one year to his maximum lifespan for each day spent in hibernation. If the Elder Druid does not maintain the ratio, the days spent in Elder Druid sleep provide no benefit. Druid sleep can be used to prolong

ELDER DRUID

HIT DIE: D4

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	*Communication*, Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC)	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Druid fire 1/day	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	*Sense magic*	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Elder Druid resistance, Druid fire 2/day	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Uncanny dodge (can't be flanked)	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Druid fire 3/day	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Druid sleep	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Elder Druid blade, Druid fire 4/day	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Incredible Memory	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Immolate body, Druid fire 5/day	+1 level of existing class

DRUID SLEEP

The druid sleep is a powerful tool the last Elder Druids use to extend their ability to protect the Four Lands; however, using the sleep makes the Elder Druid dependent on it. Such individuals can walk the world for only short times before their energies are exhausted, and they must sleep again for a minimum of twenty-eight days. If used too often, the druid sleep robs its user of his humanity, gradually turning him into a creature of the spirit world. Such is what happened to the rebel Elder Druid Brona.

Every twenty-eight days past the first four weeks that someone spends in druid sleep, he must make a successful Will save (DC 15) or be turned into a ghost like the Warlock Lord (see the "Heroes of Shannara" on page 44). For every twenty-eight days the sleep continues, another Will save must be made, increasing in difficulty by one (DC 16 after 84 days, 17 after 112, and so on) until the saving throw fails.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Elder Druid, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any nonevil.
Knowledge (arcana): 10 ranks.
Knowledge (history): 5 ranks.
Feats: Skill Focus–Knowledge (history).
Spellcasting: Must be able to cast spells.
Special: Must be nominated and trained by another Elder Druid and must forsake all other loyalties to any political power, nation, or deity. Clerics who forsake their deity lose all spells and class features and cannot gain levels as clerics.

one's life beyond that point, but such excessive use brings on additional side effects (see the sidebar). Provided the Elder Druid continues hibernating on a regular basis, he will no longer suffer the penalties of aging, nor will he show physical signs of aging. Bonuses still accrue.

Elder Druid Blade: At 8th level, the Elder Druid learns how to temporarily infuse a weapon with magical energy. This can be done as a free action, provided the weapon is already held in hand. The Elder Druid must sacrifice a memorized spell or the use of a spell slot for the remainder of the day. In exchange, the weapon is considered to have an enhancement bonus equal to the level of the spell sacrificed for the purpose of surpassing damage reduction only. A weapon infused with a 0-level spell performs as a silver weapon for the duration of the enhancement. This temporary enhancement lasts for 1 round per class level. This is a supernatural ability.

Incredible Memory At 9th level, the Elder Druid gains the ability to recall any memory with surprising accuracy. This gives the Elder Druid a +5 competence bonus on all Knowledge checks. This ability is also useful in combat, as it gives the Elder Druid a +2 competence bonus to attack rolls against any opponent he has fought during a prior encounter. This is an extraordinary ability.

Immolate Body: At 10th level, the Elder Druid can increase his abilities at the cost of his health. The Elder Druid can exceed his daily uses of the druid fire, suffering 1 point of temporary Constitution damage with each use. This can also be done for spells. Casting an extra spell causes 1 point of Constitution damage plus 1 per level of the spell. Casting an extra spell from level 5-8 also ages the Elder Druid by 1d4 years. Casting an extra 9th level spell ages the Elder Druid by 2d4+2 years and deals Constitution damage. This damage is suffered immediately after a spell is cast. This is a supernatural ability.

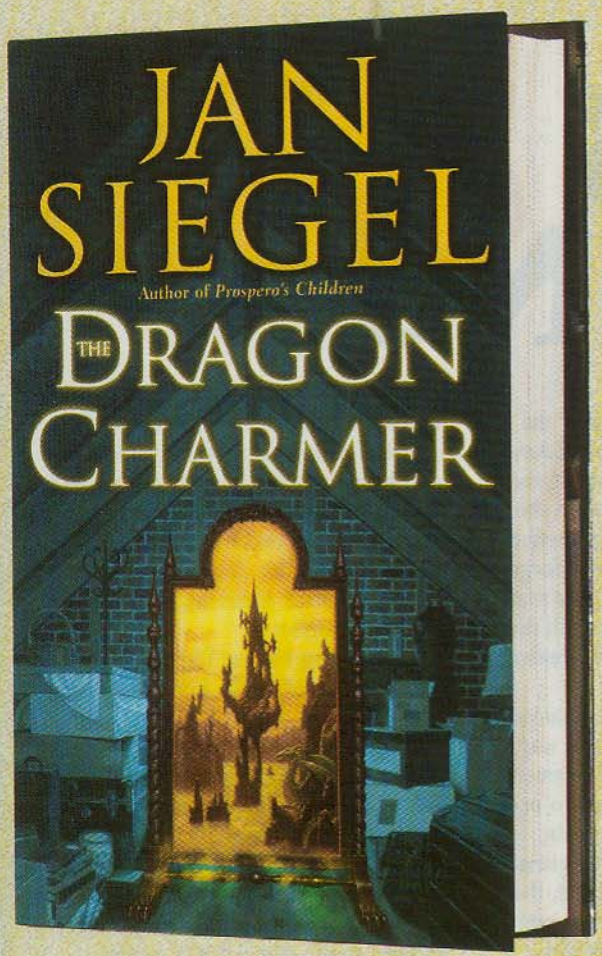
CLASS SKILLS

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

The Elder Druid's class skills (organized by key ability) are:

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
		Concentration	Alchemy	Profession	Bluff
			Appraise	Sense Motive	Diplomacy
			Craft		Gather Information
			Knowledge (any)		
			Search		
			Scry		
			Spellcraft		

From an author of "Pure Magic" —*More* Magic!



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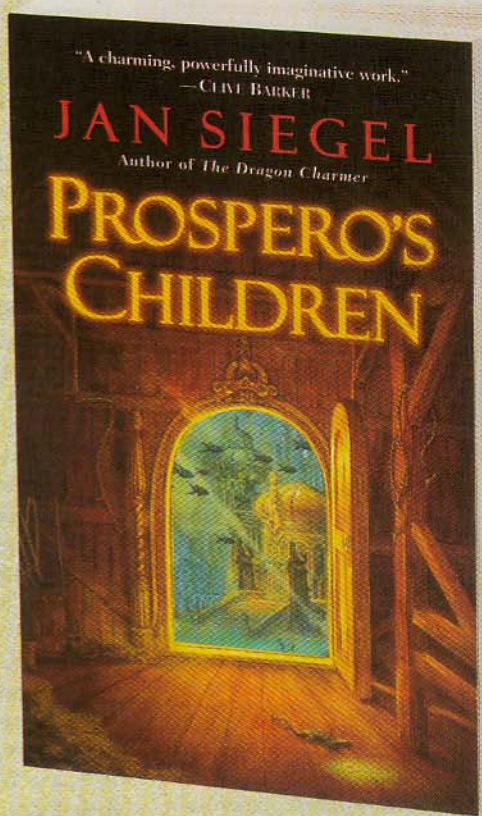

DEL REY
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No story is complete without its heroes and villains. In D&D, players tend to side with the former, and DMs enjoy playing the latter. Naturally, the Four Lands have their share of personalities on the side of both good and evil. The Ohmsfords are the common man's heroes, giving up lives of simplicity and peace to combat great evils. Aided by their ancestral friends the Leahs and other great heroes, such as the Creels and the Druids Allanon and Walker, they've managed to triumph again and again against evil beings like the Warlock Lord, the shadowen Rimmer Dall, and the fiendish Dagda Mor.

The World of Shannara

HEROES & VILLAINS

by Brian Murphy with Chris Thomasson

illustrated by Val Mayerik

All characters are presented as though they have completed the adventures they undertook before the upcoming novel. Most gained their commoner or expert levels before embarking on any quest.

TYPICAL DRUID

Male Humans
7th-level sorcerers, 10th-level Elder Druids

Strength	10 (+0)	Fort. Save	+6
Dexterity	14 (+2)	Ref. Save	+9
Constitution	12 (+1)	Will Save	+15
Intelligence	19 (+4)	Alignment	NG
Wisdom	16 (+3)	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	18 (+4)	Size	M (varies)
Hit Points	66	Armor Class	12
Melee Attack	+8/+3	Flat-Footed AC	12
Ranged Attack	+10/+5	Touch AC	12

Special: Druid fire (10d6+3, 5 times/day); *comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic,* and *tongues* at will; +4 to saves against poison and disease; uncanny dodge (cannot be flanked); uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); +5 competence bonus on all Knowledge skill checks; +2 competence bonus on all attacks against previously battled opponents; Elder Druid blade; immolate body. (For a description of these Elder Druid abilities, see the Elder Druid prestige class on page 40).

Skills*: Bluff +9, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +18, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +31, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +29, Scry +14, Search +9, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +24.

Feats: Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus–Knowledge (history), Toughness.

Possessions: dark robes, dagger, traveling gear.

*The skill totals include the benefits gained from feats, synergy bonuses, and the Elder Druid class.

The Druids

Throughout the last millennia of the Four Land's history, the Druid Council attempted to guide the people of the Four Lands toward peace. When the Warlock Lord (see below) threatened that peace, it was Bremen who forged the mystical *Sword of Shannara* that allowed Jerle Shannara to banish the Warlock Lord from the mortal realm for a time.

Bremen took an apprentice named Allanon, a young orphan of the war. Eventually, Allanon replaced Bremen as a wandering mystic, dedicated to preserving the Druid Council's goals. Allanon aided the Four Lands against the minions of the Warlock Lord, the Demon Hordes, and the mord wraiths before his death at the hands of a Jachyra. He is an integral part of the Four Land's history.

Walker is now the last of the Druids, guided to that path by the shade of Allanon. As a man, Walker Boh brought Paranor back to the mortal realm and became its sole inhabitant. He aided in destroying the Shadowen threat, and helped free the Four Lands from their tyranny. Now he travels into the unknown across the Blue Divide to seek a long-lost and powerful magic in the company of the last heir to the Shannara legacy and a contingent of elves and rovers.

Appearance: The Druids have always been ominous figures, their very appearance causing many people to avoid them. They are typically tall and lean, and wear black cloaks that shroud their faces. Allanon is described as a large man–about 7 feet tall–with a dark beard and hair, and a forbidding face and manner. Bremen shares many physical similarities, although his hair and beard are mostly gray and he is far frailer. Walker Boh also has a dark, trimmed beard and hair, and although somewhat shorter, looks quite a lot like Allanon. Walker is missing his right arm above the elbow.

Roleplaying Notes: The Druids should play the role of guide, but never leader. They fight for the greater good and are more than willing to trick men into becoming heroes. They see their deceit not as dishonorable, but as a necessity in the fight against evil.

Allanon should have a Strength score of 16 to reflect his large size. He can be quite rash, and he occasionally loses his temper at the ignorance of others. Allanon regrets having to keep secrets from those he views as his charges, and he sometimes has doubts about whether he's going about his tasks in the right way.

Bremen should have an additional three levels of sorcerer to reflect his superior mastery of the arcane arts. He is the most patient of the three and his wisdom is rarely overshadowed by his personal feelings. Bremen has an incredible amount of tolerance for other's foolishness, as he had to deal with a reluctant and ultimately doomed Druid Council that refused to acknowledge the threat of the Warlock Lord.

Walker is the newest of the Druids. Although originally reluctant to join their ranks, he has since seen the value a reestablished Druid Council could have on the Four Lands. Thus, his primary goal is to convince the leaders of the

other races how beneficial such an organization would be to them. Walker also resents the secrecy that the Druids maintain in keeping some knowledge to themselves, but he has come to view it as a necessary evil of his position as guardian of the Four Lands.

The Ohmsfords

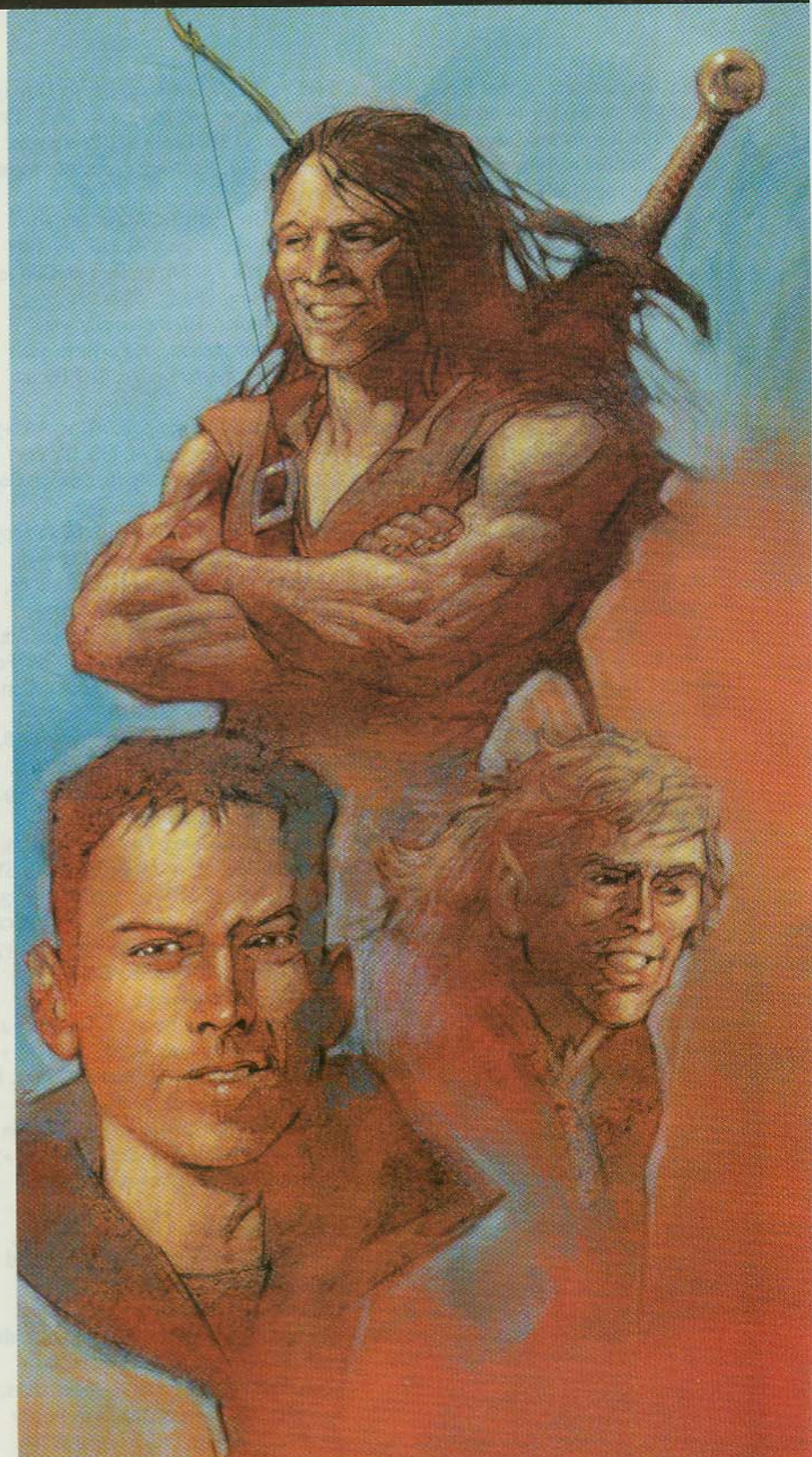
Each Ohmsford has his or her own story, each of which is far too long to be told in this article. If you want to know their stories, you should look for this series of books in your local bookstore. Generally speaking, however, the Ohmsfords are simple, unassuming half-elves thrust into the role of heroes due to the circumstance of birth. They desire to pursue their own careers and want little to do with the adventures thrust upon them.

Shea Ohmsford is a simple innkeeper who was actually adopted by the Ohmsford family. Flick Ohmsford is Shea's brother, and one of the only Ohmsford's in the histories who does not possess some ability to wield magic. Wil Ohmsford is a healer who trained with the gnomes of Storlock. Brin and Jair Ohmsford were the first Ohmsfords to demonstrate the power of the *wishsong*. Par Ohmsford also possessed the *wishsong*, and used it battle the Shadowen. Coll Ohmsford, Par's brother, showed signs of his Shannara heritage later than most of his relatives and ancestors. Wren Ohmsford led the struggle to return the elves from their exile.

The latest generation of Ohmsfords is unlike any seen before. Bek grew up in the care of the Leah family, never knowing his ancestry until it was revealed to him by the Druid, Walker. He has the power of the *true wishsong*. Grianne also has use of the *wishsong*, but she believes her brother dead, and Walker responsible for his and her parents' deaths. As a result, she is the Druid's sworn enemy and is bent on his destruction. She has given up her birth name and goes by the moniker of the Ilse Witch.

Appearance: Although appearances vary, just as in any family, there are certain traits that seem to be prevalent. The Ohmsfords tend to be rather slender, and they typically have brown or blond hair. They are mostly of average height and build (Flick and Coll are exceptions). Sometimes their features are more elven (Shea, Par, and Wren), while at other times their appearances are more representative of their human ancestors (Flick, Will, Brin, Jair, Coll, Bek, and Grianne).

Roleplaying Notes: The Ohmsfords are commoners with a heritage of heroism. Each one has his or her strengths and weaknesses, as detailed below. One thing to



The Wishsong

The *wishsong* is a spell-like ability possessed only by a few Ohmsfords. Brin was the first to have it; Jair, Par, Bek, and Grianne also have the *wishsong*.

The *wishsong* comes in two forms: the true *wishsong* and the illusory *wishsong*. Brin, Par, Bek, and Grianne all possess the true *wishsong*, although Par's ability changed only from the illusory *wishsong* temporarily. Jair only ever possessed the illusory *wishsong*. The true *wishsong* allows the user to cast a *wish* spell once per round with only a verbal component.

The illusory *wishsong* allows the user to cast any one spell from the school of Illusion once per round. This spell has only a verbal component.

remember, however, is that the Ohmsfords always try to do the right thing, even if it means leaving their chosen path for months or even years to help the Four Lands in the fight against evil.

Shea, Half-Elf Com3/Ftr3: hp 25; AC 11; Atk +4 melee, or +5 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Craft (carpentry) +6, Profession (innkeep) +7, Swim +6. *Feats:* Endurance, Dodge, Run, Skill Focus–Craft (carpentry), Quick Draw.

Flick, Half-Elf Com3/Ftr3: hp 33; AC 11; Atk +4 melee, or +5 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Craft (carpentry) +4, Profession (innkeep) +7, Jump +3, Swim +3. *Feats:* Endurance, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Run, Toughness.

Wil, Exp5: hp 25; AC 10; Atk +3 melee, or +4 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Alchemy +8, Diplomacy + 5, Gather Information +5, Heal +11, Knowledge (nature) +4, Profession (healer) +9, Spot +8, Swim +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Skill focus (Heal).

Brin and Jair, Com8: hp 22; AC 11; Atk +4 melee, or +5 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12. *Skills:* Craft (carpentry) +6, Listen +9, Profession (innkeep) +7, Spot +9. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge.

Par, Brd5: hp 20; AC 11; Atk +3 melee, or +4 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15. *Skills:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +7, Perform +12, Tumble +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Skill Focus (Perform).

Coll, Brd2/Ftr3: hp 31; AC 11; Atk +7 melee, or +5 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13. *Skills:* Concentration +6, Climb +6, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Jump +6, Perform +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Endurance, Quick Draw, Toughness.

Wren, Ari1/Rog4: hp 22; AC 12; Atk +3 melee, or +5 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Bluff +5, Diplomacy + 8, Gather Information +8, Hide +9, Listen +11, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +8, Spot +11, Search +9. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge.

Bek Rowe, Com3/Ftr1: hp 17; AC 11; Atk +2 melee, or +3 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Craft (carpentry) +8, Profession (innkeep) +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Skill Focus–Craft (carpentry), Toughness.

Grianne, Exp3: hp 25; AC 11; Atk +2 melee, or +3 ranged; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. *Skills:* Bluff +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge.

The Leahs

Background: The Leah family ruled the small city of Leah for centuries before the Federation seized control and occupied the city. At that point the Leah family became little more than powerless nobles. Prior to those days, however, the men of the Leah family were heroes who fought against the forces of darkness.

Menion Leah fought against the forces of the Warlock Lord during the Third War of the Races and helped save the city of Tyrsis from destruction. He is considered to be one of the finest archers and trackers in the land, and he always carries his masterwork longbow with him. His grandson, Rone Leah, went with Brin Ohmsford as her protector, defending her from Mord Wraiths and other horrors as they traveled to the Maelmord. Morgan aided Par, Coll, Wren, and Walker in their battles against the shadowen. Quentin Leah is a brave and good-intentioned friend of Bek Rowe who joins the company formed by Walker traveling across the Blue Divide.

Roleplaying Notes: The Leahs are brash but resourceful young humans. Despite their experience, their youthful eagerness to save the day never seems to disappear.

Menion, Ftr3/Rgr4: hp 54; AC 13; Atk +9 melee, or +10 ranged; AL CG; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12. *Skills:* Climb +6, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +9. *Feats:* Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Track, and Weapon Focus (longbow).

Rone, Ftr7: hp 57; AC 13; Atk +10 melee, or +9 ranged; AL CG; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12. *Skills:* Climb +13, Jump +13, Ride +12, Swim +13. *Feats:* Cleave, Iron Will, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Morgan, Ftr5/Rog2: hp 43; AC 12; Atk +8 melee, or +8 ranged; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12. *Skills:* Bluff +6, Climb+12, Gather Information +6, Hide +8, Jump +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +6, Tumble +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Quick Drawn, Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Quentin, Ftr3: hp 24; AC 11; Atk +5 melee, or +4 ranged; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11. *Skills:* Climb +7, Jump +7, Ride +5, Swim +6. *Feats:* Cleave, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Padishar/Panamon Creel

Appearance: Panamon and Padishar Creel both have tanned skin and dark hair. Panamon is Padishar's ancestor, and he has wisps of gray scattered through his hair when he meets Shea Ohmsford and helps him retrieve the *Sword of Shannara* from the bowels of

PADISHAR/ PANAMON CREEL

Male Human, 5th-level fighter/4th-level rogue

Strength	14 (+2)	Fort. Save	+6
Dexterity	18 (+4)	Ref. Save	+9
Constitution	13 (+1)	Will Save	+1
Intelligence	15 (+2)	Alignment	CG
Wisdom	8 (-1)	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	17 (+3)	Size	M (6'1")
Hit Points	12	Armor Class	11
Melee Attack	+10/+5	Flat-Footed AC	10
Ranged Attack	+12/7	Touch AC	11

Skills: Appraise +14, Bluff +15, Climb +6*, Craft (weaponsmithng) +10, Gather Information +9, Jump +10, Pick Pockets +16, Ride +12, Swim +10.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Exotic Weapon (stump pike*), Improved Critical (stump pike*), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative**, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (stump pike*), Weapon Specialization (stump pike*).

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork longsword, masterwork dagger, traveling gear.

* Panamon and Padishar both suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to Climb checks due to their lack of a left hand.

**Padishar has Leadership instead of this feat.

Stump Pike: The stump pike is akin to a stump dagger (see *Sword and Fist*) except that it deals 1d8 piercing damage. The stump pike's critical range (19-20, x3) does not increase during continuous melee.

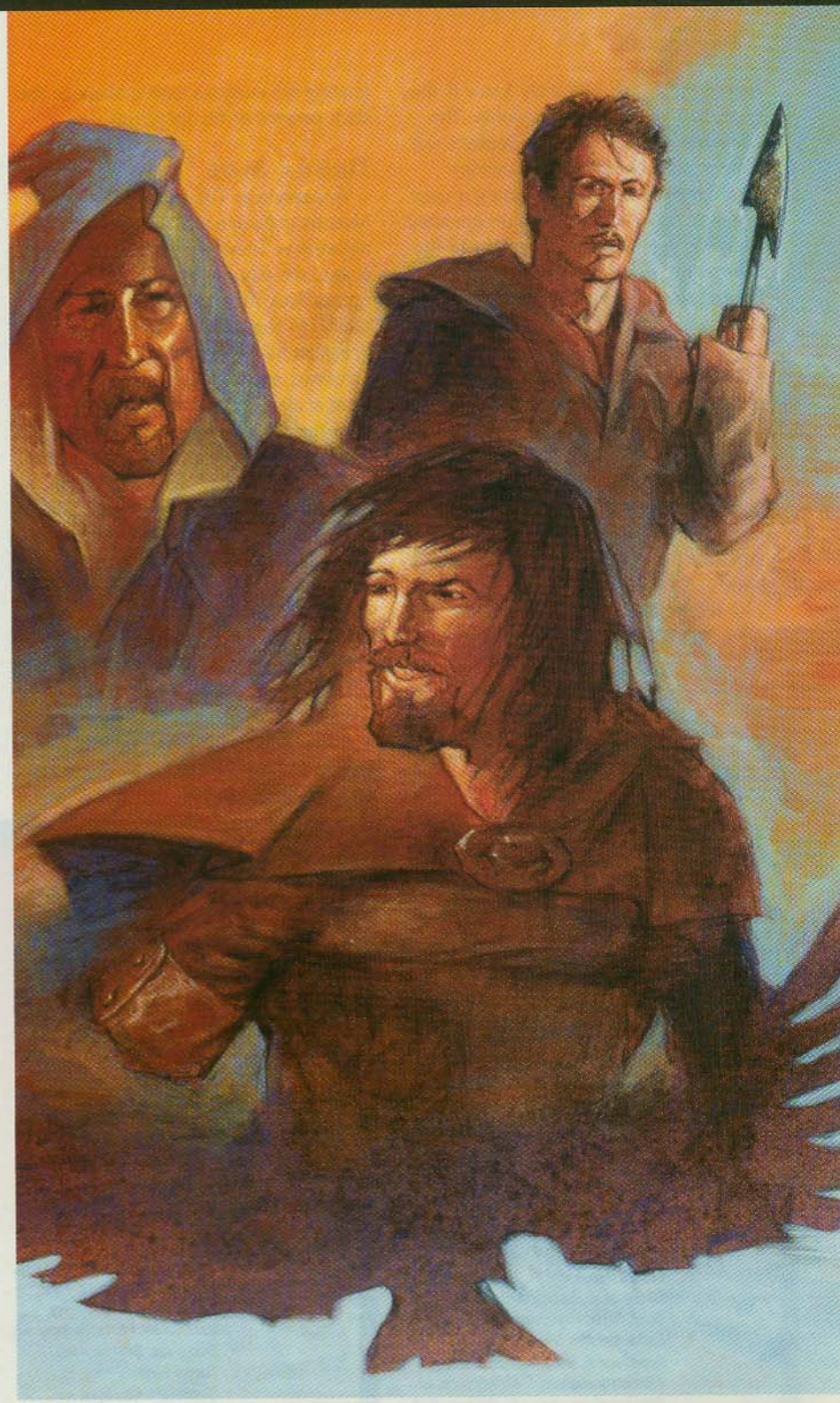
the Warlock Lord's stronghold. Padishar is a younger man when he meets Par Ohmsford and helps him escape the clutches of Rimmer Dall and his Seekers. Both of them share one distinct trait, however: They are both missing their left hand. In its place is the head of a pike.

Background: The background of the Creel family is largely unknown, although the family name was originally Screl. Urpox Screl aided the archdruid Bremen by forging the blade that was later enchanted to become the *Sword of Shannara*.

Panamon Creel is a highwayman who robs most anyone with more money than he has. No common brigand, he is highly adept at his trade. Although he has no real moral compunction against killing, Panamon favors robbing gnomes and other enemies of Man. He met Shea Ohmsford after killing and robbing the gnomes who had taken the Valeman hostage. Panamon was then embroiled in the Third War of the Races, and he showed a surprising amount of valor considering his career.

Padishar Creel is the head of the resistance against the Federation, and he spends much of his time planning raids and uprisings against that oppressive group. Unlike his ancestor, Padishar is more concerned with the movement than his own well being, and he would gladly die fighting for the cause.

Roleplaying Notes: Both Creels are proud men, although Panamon borders on arrogant. Both are also very charming, a skill they use to different degrees. Panamon is likely to become your best friend while picking your pocket at the same time. Padishar is far more likely to try to bring you over to the side of the resistance. Both men are extremely honorable, though, and keep their word no matter the consequences.



Rimmer Dall

Appearance: Rimmer Dall appears to be tall, well-built, rangy human. He has a chiseled, commanding face and a coarse, reddish half-beard. He has strange, penetrating eyes, and he can appear as friendly as a close confidant, or as menacing as a nightmare should he desire.

Background: Rimmer Dall is something of a living legend in the Four Lands. He is known as a man bent on carrying out his task of ferreting out and destroying all the magic left in the world, no matter the cost in lives or resources. Dall led the Seekers, the organization within the Federation devoted to this task, and he performed his job efficiently and ruthlessly. Thus, the First Seeker was a perfect target for the shadowen to possess.

As a shadowen, Rimmer Dall's most important task was to locate the Ohmsfords, the scions of Shannara, and either destroy them or bring them under his control. He has used his influence within the Federation to subtly and gradually extend his control beyond the Seekers, and Rimmer has become one of the driving forces behind the Federation's bid to annex all of the Four Lands.

Roleplaying Notes: Rimmer Dall is

feared by all, for few truly know if they carry the spark of magic within. The common folk fear that the Seekers will appear on their doorstep someday under the pretense of arresting a user of magic, only to carry off an innocent who was somehow inconvenient to the Federation. Rimmer is an intimidating figure, even if his actual identity is unknown.

Dall rarely carries more than his armor and weapons, preferring to rely on his fellow Seekers to provide him with any other gear he might need. He also prefers to get his way by asserting the authority of his position and the presence of armed men at his side, using his shadowen magic or his own skill at arms as a last resort. If pressed, however, he will not hesitate to strike with all the power at his command, decimating his enemies with a blade or the dark powers at his fingertips.

RIMMER DALL

Male Human, 8th-level Fighter
(Possessed by: Shadowen, 14th-level Fighter)

Strength	19 (+4)	Fort. Save	+14
Dexterity	16 (+3)	Ref. Save	+8
Constitution	14 (+2)	Will Save	+10
Intelligence	19 (+4)	Alignment	CE
Wisdom	15 (+2)	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	21 (+5)	Size	M (6' 3")
Hit Points	79	Armor Class	13
Melee Attack +19/+16/+11/6		Flat-Footed AC	10
		Touch AC	13
Ranged Attack +18/+15/+10/+5			

Special: In addition to his fighting prowess, Rimmer Dall possesses all the abilities of a shadowen (see "Creatures of Shannara" on page 52).

Skills: Bluff +9, Climb +12, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +13, Hide +6, Intimidate +15, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +5, Ride +11, Scry +7, Search +7, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +11, Spot +9, Swim +12

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Critical (dagger), Leadership, Mobility, Quick Draw, Silent Spell, Spring Attack, Still Spell, Whirlwind Attack, Weapon Focus (touch), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (dagger).

Possessions: *Mirrorshroud* (see "The Artifacts of Shannara" on page 56). Rimmer Dall has access to the armory and treasury of the Federation, which means that most any weapon or piece of equipment he wants, he can get.

This statistics block represents Rimmer Dall as an 8th-level fighter under the power of a shadowen's malevolence ability. The shadowen is a 14th-level fighter and the feats are those possessed by the shadowen. The skills are also the shadowen's but modified by Rimmer Dall's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution.

Dagda Mor

Appearance: The Dagda Mor is a hideous creature straight out of a nightmare. Though roughly humanoid in shape, the demon lord has a large hump on his back that forces him to hunch over. His teeth are hooked, and tufts of greenish hair sprout from his torso. His forearms and legs are covered in reptilian scales, and his arms are longer than the average human's. The Dagda Mor's face sports a feline muzzle and shining black eyes. The demon lord wears a large, concealing black cloak to hide his physical features while traveling in the Four Lands. The Dagda Mor carries a large scepter with him, which is actually his *staff of power*.

Background: Trapped behind the Forbidding with the first planting of the Ellcrys along with the rest of demonkind, the Dagda Mor has been hungering for vengeance against the elves who imprisoned his kind. He sees any who stand in the way of the total annihilation of the races of the Four Lands as his enemies, and he will stop at nothing to achieve his goals.

Roleplaying Notes: The Dagda Mor is very intelligent, and he is not so obsessed with his goals that espionage and subtlety are beyond his grasp. He does not hesitate to use his *staff of power* in combat, since most of his innate magical abilities are not accessible while the Ellcrys stands, but he also doesn't hesitate to engage in hand-to-hand combat to defeat a difficult foe. Most of all, however, the Dagda Mor will stop at nothing to destroy the Ellcrys and let the demons through the Forbidding to ravage the land.

The Warlock Lord

Appearance: The Warlock Lord is an ethereal being with a gaunt and skeletal form. His eyes glow red, and he is always wearing a tattered black cloak.

Background: The Warlock Lord was once a human named Brona who was a member of the Druid Council. He was an intelligent and ambitious man, and he gained power quickly. Brona eventually

DAGDA MOR

Large Outsider (Evil)

Hit Dice: 13d8+52 (110 hp)
Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
AC: 30 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +20 natural)
Attacks: 2 slams +20 melee
Damage: Slam 1d6+7 and fear
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, fear
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 30/+3, detect magic, immunities, outsider traits, resistances, see invisibility, SR 18, telepathy
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +13
Abilities: Str 25, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 16
Skills: Bluff +18, Concentration +19, Hide +13, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +20, Move Silently +13, Scry +21, Search +20, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +21, Spot +21.
Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)
Climate/Terrain: Any land or underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 16
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Immunities (Ex): The Dagda Mor is immune to poison and electricity.
Resistances (Ex): The Dagda Mor has cold, fire, and acid resistance 20.
Telepathy (Su): The Dagda Mor can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.
Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*blasphemy, deeper darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect law, fear, greater dispelling, pyrotechnics, read magic, suggestion, symbol* (any), *telekinesis, teleport without error* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *tongues* (self only), *unhallow, unholy aura, unholy blight, and wall of fire;* 1/day—*fire storm and implosion.* These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).
Fear (Su): A creature hit by the Dagda Mor's melee attacks must succeed at a Will save (DC 19) or flee in terror for 1d6 rounds.
Detect Magic (Su): The Dagda Mor continuously detects magic as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.
See Invisibility (Su): The Dagda Mor sees invisibility as the *see invisibility* spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.
Possessions: Black cloak, *staff of power.*

Note that as long as any part of the Forbidding is intact, the Dagda Mor cannot use any of his spell-like abilities. His immunities, resistances, telepathy, fear, detect magic, and see invisibility powers always function, however.

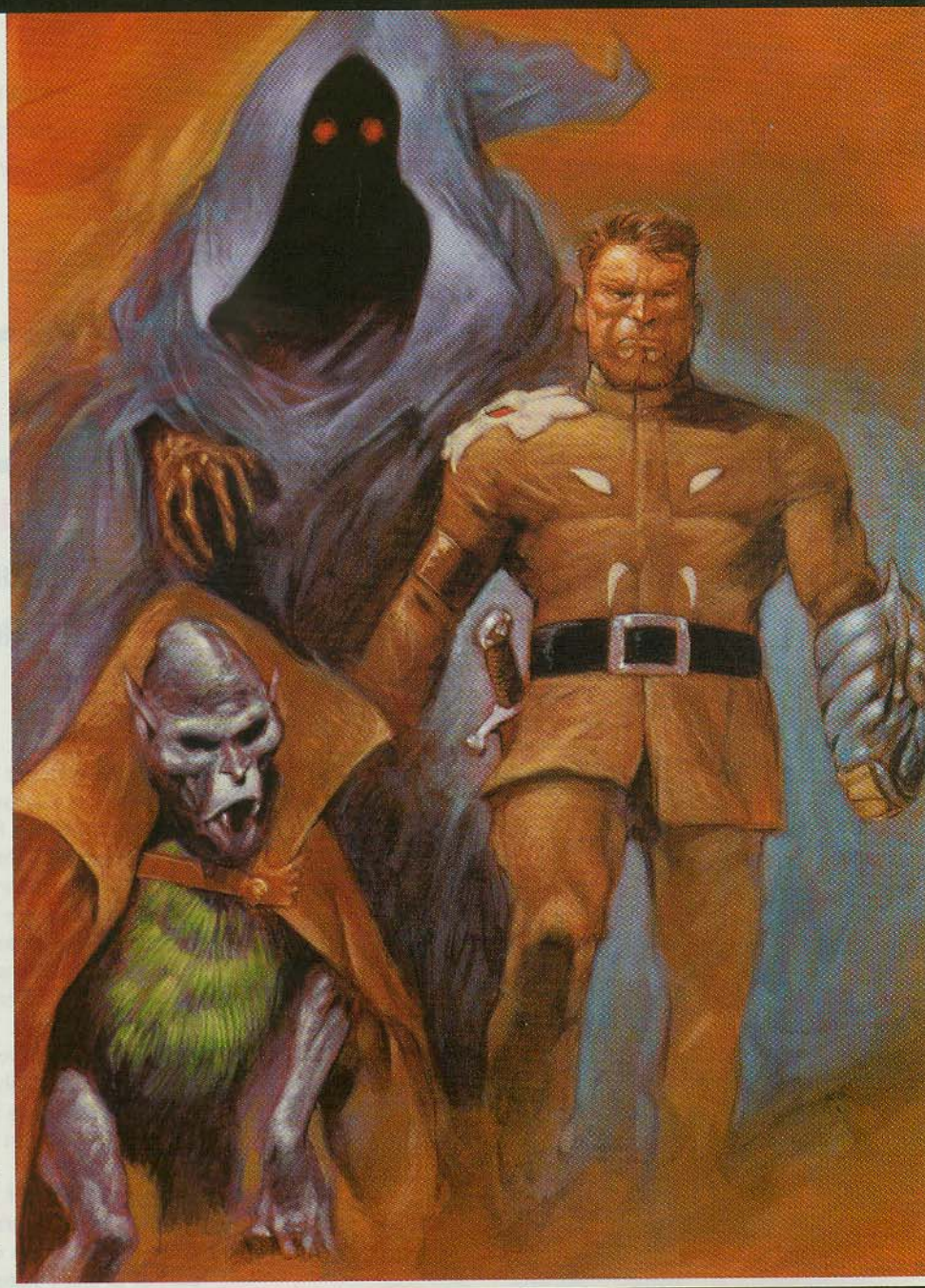
got his hands on the Ildatch, a powerful tome of dark magic scribed by the ancient demons long before the birth of mankind. When the other Druids saw the hold the dark book had on him, they attempted to free him, but Brona had grown too powerful and he left Paranor with a number of supporters. Those supporters became skull bearers.

Convinced that he was meant to rule the Four Lands, Brona used the magic of the Ildatch to unite the human kingdoms under his command and marched forth with a massive army. This was known as the First War of the Races, and Brona nearly accomplished his plans. The combined elven and dwarven armies managed to turn his forces back with the aid of the Druid Council. Several centuries later Brona returned, now warped by the dark magic of the Ildatch, along with abuse of the Druid Sleep (see the Elder Druid prestige class on page 40).

Humanity was still weak from the previous war, thus an army of rock trolls was the Warlock Lord's implement of conquest. To make certain he would be unopposed, the Warlock Lord first sent several skull bearers and rock trolls to storm Paranor and eliminated all but four Druids. The Druid Council has never recovered from this slaughter. The archdruid Bremen managed to create the *Sword of Shannara*, which was wielded by the elven king Jerle Shannara, to dispatch the Warlock Lord. This was known as the Second War of the Races. Unfortunately Jerle Shannara faltered in his use of the blade, and the Warlock Lord managed to survive.

After taking five centuries to marshal his strength once more, the Warlock Lord returned one final time, sending forth armies of rock trolls and gnomes. Shea Ohmsford is believed to have finally destroyed him at Skull Mountain, wielding the *Sword of Shannara*.

Roleplaying Notes: The Warlock Lord is an extremely powerful individual who is both evil and mad. He has never been known to parlay, show mercy, or even speak with anyone. Any DM who is planning to send their party against the Warlock Lord had best think twice, as he is a match for even a 20th-level group. Since he has no Constitution score he can use his immolate body ability at will. Nothing save the *Sword of Shannara* or a similar artifact can prevent him from rejuvenating. D



THE WARLOCK LORD

Male Human Ghost, 10th-level sorcerer, 10th-level Elder Druid

Strength	– (–)	Fort. Save	+6
Dexterity	10 (+0)	Ref. Save	+6
Constitution	– (–)	Will Save	+15
Intelligence	18 (+4)	Alignment	LE
Wisdom	12 (+1)	Speed	Fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Charisma	25 (+7)	Size	M (5 ft. 11 in.)
Hit Points	155	Armor Class	17
Melee Attack	+10/+5	Flat-Footed AC	17
Ranged Attack	+10/+5	Touch AC	17

Special: Druid fire (10d6+3, 5 times/day); *comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic,* and *tongues* at will; +4 to saves against poison and disease; uncanny dodge (cannot be flanked); uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); +5 competence bonus on all Knowledge skill checks; +2 competence bonus on all attacks against previously battled opponents; Elder Druid blade; immolate body; manifestation; corrupting gaze; frightful moan; horrific appearance; rejuvenation; turn resistance; undead; incorporeal.

Skills: Bluff +22, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +22, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (tactics) +19, Listen +9, Search +12, Sense Motive +16, Scry +14, Spellcraft +27, Spot +9.

Feats: Combat Casting, Forge Ring, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus–Knowledge (arcana), Skill Focus–Knowledge (history).

Possessions: None.

Living in the Four Lands requires a quick wit and sharp sword, for death can come swiftly. Throughout the world of Shannara lurk exist deadly and dangerous monsters, remnants of the dark forces that once marched across the land, or savage predators that run wild throughout the countryside.

The World of Shannara

CREATURES of the Four Lands

by Brian Murphy with Chris Thomasson

illustrated by Dennis Cramer

Few have not heard of the skull bearers, monstrous beasts who served the Warlock Lord during the three Wars of the Races. Although many believe these dark figures no longer threaten the Four Lands, few are willing to enter Skull Mountain to prove the theory.

Mord wraiths are likewise notorious, having earned a reputation that strikes fear into the hearts of child and adult alike. Spawning powerful flames from their fingertips, the black walkers have left few to tell the tale of encountering them.

The moor cat is less evil than those fell creatures, but it can be just as deadly. The creature's innate ability to camouflage itself makes it one of the Four Lands's best hunters. Be wary: If you can see one moor cat, another has already crept behind you.

The rock trolls of the Northland are among the mightiest warriors in Shannara, and their armies are truly to be feared. In the Wars of the Races, the trolls were an integral part of Brona's plans, but at their heart they are not a wicked people. Their armies rarely venture out of the Northland, as they are content to live there in peace. Few are willing to risk war with these powerful beings, and fewer still have cause to seek it.

One of the most powerful races ever to stalk the Four Lands, the shadowen hide inside the bodies of others. Their magic and quick thinking has allowed them to easily hide among the other races, wreaking chaos wherever they go.

Finally, the mwellrets are creatures descended from the faeries of legend. Deadly shapeshifters, they believe first and foremost in their own superiority over the other races. Thankfully, they lack the numbers to cause any real harm to the other races, so instead they content themselves with the stray elf or dwarf who wanders too far into the Wildrun or the deep Eastland late at night.

These monstrosities are just a few of the creatures that roam through the Four Lands, but they are enough to get your campaign started in any time setting.

SKULL BEARER

Medium-Size Outsider (Evil)

Hit Dice:	10d8+40 (85 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (Dex)
Speed:	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
AC:	19 (+4 Dex, +5 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +16 melee
Damage:	Claws 1d6+7
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Eye rays +14 ranged touch, frightful presence, spells, summon flames, wounding
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 25/+3, fast healing 6, immunities, outsider traits, SR 18
Saves:	Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +10
Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16
Skills:	Bluff +11, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +9, Hide +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (war) +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +8, Read Lips +8, Scry +8, Search +9, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +13, Spot +11, Use Magic Device +10
Feats:	Improved Critical (claw), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Climate/Terrain:	Any land or underground
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or battalion (5-20)
Challenge Rating:	12
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	By character class

The skull bearers were once elder druids who followed the rebel Brona. After their dark master underwent his transformation, he changed his followers into powerful creatures to serve as his elite forces.

A skull bearer stands roughly 6 feet tall and weighs approximately 320 pounds. They have hunched, muscular torsos, and their red eyes glow softly.

Combat

The fearsome skull bearers have sent more than one champion to her grave. A skull bearer hunts its quarry methodically, observing its prey magically before attacking.

Skull bearers usually attempt to ambush a party, trapping them with a green *wall of flame* if the chance presents itself. Skull bearers disdain using weapons, preferring to use their claws and spells in tandem. Spellcasting opponents are usually the first targets of the skull bearer's eye rays.

Eye Rays (Su): As a standard action, a skull bearer can fire rays from its eyes at a single target. This attack follows the rules for rays covered under Aiming a Spell in Chapter 10: Magic of the *Player's Handbook*. This attack has a range of 100 feet and does 6d6 points of damage.

Wounding (Su): Treat skull bearer claws as if they had the weapon special ability *wounding* described in Chapter 8: Magic Items of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when the creature attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the creature has, and only those within 30 feet. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 18) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to the creature's frightful presence for one day.

Spells (Sp): Skull bearers cast spells as 10th-level sorcerers (DC 13 + spell level).

Fast Healing (Ex): The creature regains hit points at a rate of 6 per round so long as it has 1. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Immunities (Ex): Skull bearers are immune to cold and electricity.

Skull Pendant (Su): Every skull bearer wears a pendant that appears to be a silver skull hanging on a thin silver chain. This pendant functions as an *amulet of proof against detection and location* and as a *necklace of adaptation*. A skull pendant disintegrates upon separation from its owner or its owner's death.

Skills: Skull bearers receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks.

Outsider Traits: Darkvision 60 ft.; cannot be raised or resurrected (though a *wish* or *miracle* spell can restore life).

Skull Bearer Characters: Skull bearers favor the sorcerer class.

MORD WRAITH

Medium-Size Outsider (Evil)

Hit Dice:	12d8+36 (90 hp)
Initiative:	+9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	40 ft.
AC:	20 (+5 Dex, +5 natural)
Attacks:	Longsword +16 melee
Damage:	Longsword 1d8+6
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Call Fire +17 ranged touch, frightful presence, spell-like abilities
Special Qualities:	Blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 25/+3, fast healing 5, immunities, outsider traits, SR 22
Saves:	Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +14
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 21, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 18
Skills:	Bluff +12, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +12, Hide +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (any) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Read Lips +11, Scry +11, Search +11, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11, Spot +14, Use Magic Device +12
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Track
Climate/Terrain:	Any land or underground
Organization:	Solitary, Pair, or Troop (3-12)
Challenge Rating:	13
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	By character class

Changed by the same dark magic that warped Brona, the Mord Wraiths now obey the will of their master, the unholy tome known as the Ildatch.

A mord wraith stands about 5 and a half feet tall and weighs approximately 150 pounds. They have wiry frames, and thin, dark gray cloaks hide all but their hands.

Combat

In combat, mord wraiths strike quickly and attempt to cripple a party's defenses. Mord wraiths will usually begin a battle by unleashing a blast of green fire at the most physically impressive opponent, as they have little to fear from most spells. Should a mord wraith be reduced to less than 25% of its hit points, it usually uses its *fire storm* ability to cover its retreat. Mord wraiths will withdraw and gather reinforcements if necessary.

Call Fire (Su): Mord wraiths can summon a blast of green fire as a standard action. This attack follows the rules for rays covered under Aiming a Spell in Chapter 10: Magic of the *Player's Handbook*. This attack has a range of 50 feet and does 5d6 points of fire damage.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): At will—*greater magic weapon, fire shield, fire trap, flame blade, flaming sphere, produce flame, wall of fire;* 1/day—*fire storm, flame strike.* These spells' fire effects are colored green. They function as if cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 14 + spell level).

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when the creature is seen. It affects only opponents with fewer hit dice or levels than the creature has and only those within 50 feet. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 20) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to the creature's frightful presence for one day.

Immunities (Ex): Mord wraiths are immune to poison, electricity, and fire.

Blindsight (Ex): The creature maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using sound, scent, and vibration. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, although the creature still can't discern ethereal beings. The creature usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability. The blindsight has a range of 60 feet.

Fast Healing (Ex): The creature regains hit points at a rate of 5 per round so long as it has 1. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Outsider Traits: Mord wraiths cannot be raised or resurrected (though a *wish* or *miracle* spell can restore life).

Mord Wraith Characters: Mord wraiths favor the sorcerer class.

MOOR CAT

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	8d10+24 (68 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (+4 Dex)
Speed:	50 ft.
AC:	16 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +15 melee, bite +9 melee
Damage:	Claws 1d8+7, bite 1d10+3
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d8+3
Special Qualities:	Blend, low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 24, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 12
Skills:	Hide +12, Jump +14, Move Silently +16, Wilderness Lore +5
Feats:	Track, Weapon Focus (claw)
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate forest, hill, plains, and marsh
Organization:	Solitary, Pair, or Pride (3-12 moor cats)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	9 to 16 HD (Large); 17 to 24 (Huge)

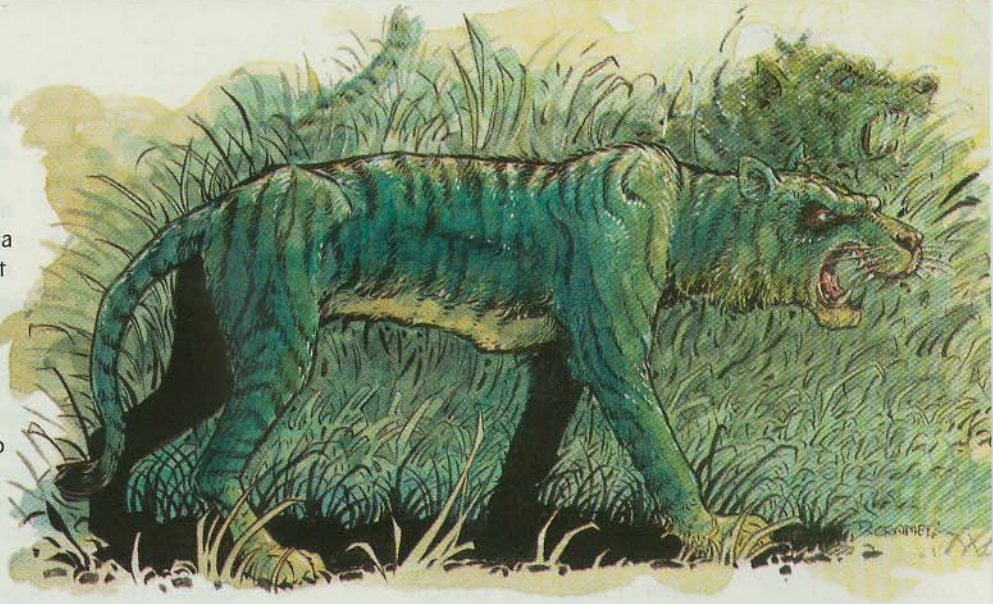
Unmatched hunters in the wild, moor cats stalk their prey with ease. A pride of these mighty creatures can easily dominate an entire forest.

Moor cats are roughly 8 feet long, and weigh over 500 pounds. Their fur is striped black and green, allowing them to easily blend in with their forest homes.

An enigmatic old hermit named Cogline is the only person known to have trained these beasts. Even so, Cogline has said on more than one occasion that his cats only obey when they want to.

Combat

Moor cats prefer to hunt in pairs, following their prey by scent. The pair waits until their prey has gone to sleep before making their presence known. They then attack, killing the prey and dragging the body back to their pride's territory.



Moor cats will retreat from creatures that prove to be too powerful for them to handle, but they will fight to the death defending their mates or their young.

Pounce (Ex): If a moor cat leaps on a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack action even if it has already taken a move action. If it hits, it can rake.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the creature hits with its bite attack, it can rake.

Rake (Ex): A moor cat can make two rake attacks (+15 melee) against a held creature with its hind legs for 1d8+3 points of damage each.

Blend (Sp): Moor cats are difficult to see and have a supernatural ability to blur their outlines. The works exactly like the spell *blur* as though cast by a 9th-level sorcerer, and it is always active. This effect can be dispelled, but the moor cat can reactivate it as a free action.

Low-Light Vision: The creature can see twice as far a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Scent (Ex): The creature can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Skills: Moor cats receive a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump, and Move Silently checks.

ROCK TROLL

Large Giant

Hit Dice:	4d8+8 (26 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	20 (-1 size, +5 breast plate, +2 large shield, +4 natural)
Attacks:	Greatsword +8 melee
Damage:	Greatsword 2d6+6
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft.
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 19, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills:	Intimidate +1, Listen +2, Spot +2
Feats:	Weapon Focus (greatsword)
Climate/Terrain:	Any Hills or Mountains
Organization:	Solitary, squad (3-18), or tribe (30-60)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually lawful neutral
Advancement:	By character class

The rock trolls call the mountainous Northlands their home. They are the greatest warriors in the Four Lands, and when their armies march, the ground trembles beneath their feet.

Rock trolls are typically 8 feet tall and weigh approximately 450 pounds. They have gray skin and are considered to be rather ugly by the other races. Rock trolls often wear colorful cloaks; each color representing a different town.

Combat

Rock trolls are skilled combatants, using their intimidating demeanor to demoralize their opponents before wading into battle to crush them.

Rock trolls are skilled soldiers who work together in seamless, deadly combat units. When in battle, they work in twos, each pair attempting to flank an enemy. This tactic has proved devastating to the enemies of the rock trolls time and time again.

Rock Troll Society

Rock troll society is rather simple: A noble family rules each town. These towns are independent and have only been united by the magical might of the Warlock Lord and his skull bearer minions. The rock troll towns typically work together and often send aid to a town under attack. It is said that prior to the Second War of the Races the trolls were a united kingdom. Sadly, the Warlock Lord destroyed any semblance of a united government when he subjugated these people.

Rock trolls are concerned first and foremost with honor and fair combat; they find subterfuge and trickery distasteful. The greatest honor a rock troll can ever aspire to is a medal called the Black Irix. The bearer of a Black Irix is known to have proved his loyalty to his family and race above all else. Such a mighty warrior's word is never questioned, and he commands

respect from even the mightiest generals and venerated elders. Few rock trolls ever receive this honor; perhaps only two or three in an entire generation will be awarded the Black Irix.

Rock Troll Characters

A rock troll's favored class is fighter; rock troll leaders tend to be fighters or fighter/clerics. Rock troll clerics do not worship a god, but they do honor a code of conduct. This path, in theory, is the way to earning the Black Irix.

Rock troll clerics can choose two of the following domains: Law, Strength, and War.

Level Adjustment: +4; rock trolls are more powerful and gain levels more slowly than most of the other common races in the Four Lands.

SHADOWEN

Medium-Size Aberration (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice:	4d8+0 (18 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	Fly 30 ft. (perfect)
AC:	13 (+3 Dex)
Attacks:	Incorporeal touch +6 melee
Damage:	Incorporeal touch 1d6 damage and 1 point of temporary Strength
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Gaze, hiss, spells, Strength damage 1, malevolence
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 20/+2, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, incorporeal subtype, spell resistance 20
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6
Abilities:	Str -, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 21
Skills:	Bluff +9, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +9, Hide +6, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +5, Scry +7, Search +7, Spellcraft +11, Spot +5
Feats:	Great Fortitude, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Focus (touch)
Climate/Terrain:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, or Pack (4-16)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	Standard according to host body, none in natural form
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	5-12 HD (Medium-size); or by class

The Shadowen are a race of foul, magic devouring creatures created as a result of elven experimentation with magic.

In their natural state, a shadowen is formed of black mist, with a vaguely humanoid form, although they do not appear to have a lower torso or legs.

It is very rare to find a shadowen in its natural state, as they are fond of possessing the bodies of powerful individuals.

Combat

Shadowen are powerful opponents, and the most powerful among them are usually found in strong and influential bodies. No two shadowen attack in the same manner, as the memories and skills of their host body often influence their methods. Most shadowen rely heavily upon their magical abilities, though.

Gaze (Su): Effect as a *fear* spell (10th-level sorcerer) within 30 ft. A Will save (DC 17) negates the effect. Each opponent within range of a gaze attack must attempt a saving throw each round at the beginning of her turn in initiative order. The creature can also actively gaze as an attack action by choosing a target within range, who must then attempt a saving throw.

Spells: A shadowen casts spells as a 10th-level sorcerer.

Hiss (Sp): As a full-round action, a shadowen can *hiss*. All opponents within 30 ft. must make a Will save (DC 17) or be subjected to a *hold person* spell as though cast by a 10th-level sorcerer. Note that in unusual conditions, a DM might allow opponents to make a Listen check. If they fail that check, they do not have to save to avoid the attack.

Strength Damage (Su): A successful melee attack causes 1 point of temporary Strength damage, or twice that on a critical hit.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, a shadowen can merge its body with a corporeal creature. This ability is similar to *magic jar* as cast by a 10th-level sorcerer, except that it does not require a receptacle. If th attack succeeds, the shadowen's body vanishes into the opponent's body. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 20). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that shadowen's malevolence for one day.

Energy Drain (Su): As a standard action, the shadowen can cause a living creature that it controls with its malevolence ability to suffer two negative levels.

Fast Healing (Ex): The creature regains hit points at a rate of 5 per

round so long as it has 1. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Incorporeal Subtype: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities; immune to all nonmagical attack forms; 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as *magic missiles*, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons); can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will; attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields (though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally); moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

MWELLRET

Medium-Size Shapechanger

Hit Dice:	3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative:	+1 (Dex)
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	20 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt)
Attacks:	2 claws +5 melee (or greatsword +5 melee), bite +3 melee; or shortbow +3 ranged
Damage:	Claw 1d4+3, greatsword 2d6+4, bite 1d6+1, or shortbow 1d6
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	*Alter self*, hypnotic hiss
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., SR 15
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills:	Climb +6, Hide +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Swim +6
Feats:	Multiattack
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate
Organization:	Gang (2-3), band (6-10 plus 1 leader of 3rd-6th level), or tribe (30-60 plus 2 lieutenants of 3rd-6th level and 1 leader of 4th-10th level)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	50% coins; 50% goods; 50% items
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement:	3 to 4 HD (Large); 5-6 HD (Huge)

According to legend, Mwellrets are sadistic shapeshifters that originally came from the deep Eastland. However, as with many of their shapeshifting brethren, time has not been kind to this race, and only small groups of the creatures still exist in isolated communities in the Eastland and Westland.

Mwellrets are gray, scaly, lizardlike humanoids in their natural form. They have flat, lidless eyes, sharp teeth and claws, and they typically clothe themselves in garb similar to that worn by the other civilized races of the Four Lands. When venturing outside their homelands, Mwellrets almost always cloak themselves in heavy, black robes to disguise their reptilian features.

Mwellrets rarely make good mercenaries or bodyguards, as they're incredibly arrogant. Their feelings of superiority make them very unlikely to accept orders from a non-Mwellret, unless that individual has clearly demonstrated power that greatly exceeds that of themselves. Only strong commanders who demonstrate their power repeatedly and with purpose can sometimes force a group of the creatures to accept their leadership.

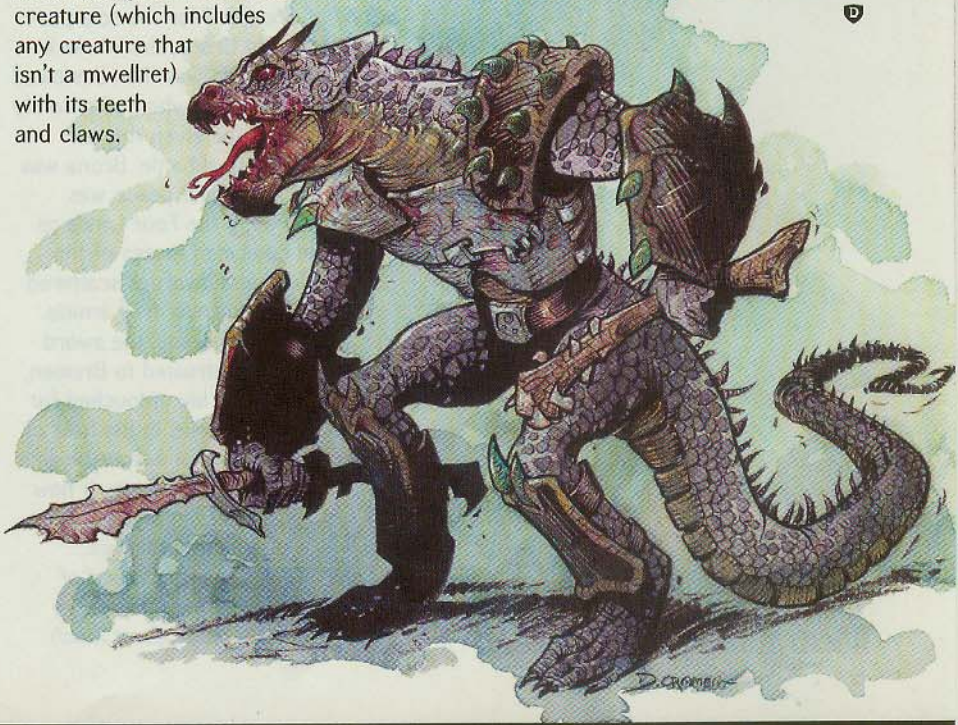
Combat

Mwellrets enjoy attacking from the shadows or with the benefit of their *alter self* power. They typically begin combat by attempting to render prey helpless with their *hypnotic hiss* before wading in with their weapons, both natural and otherwise.

Due to their extraordinary superiority complexes, Mwellrets nearly always avoid using their shapechanging power, choosing instead to appear in the their true reptilian form, especially in a fight. Nothing is more satisfying to a mwellret than ripping out the throat of a lesser creature (which includes any creature that isn't a mwellret) with its teeth and claws.

Alter Self (Sp): Mwellrets can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size creature. This works like *alter self* as cast by a 4th-level sorcerer. It can assume a new form or return to its own as a standard action.

Hypnotic Hiss (Sp): A mwellret's hiss can have a hypnotic effect on its foes. Opponents within 10 feet of a mwellret using this ability must make a Will save (DC 12) or be hypnotized as the *hypnotism* spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer.



The World of Shannara

RELICS & ARTIFACTS

by Brian Murphy

illustrated by Ron Spencer

The Four Lands are filled with ancient magic, the most powerful of which is older than recorded history. Few can create items like those of old, and those who find such ancient relics are lucky indeed. In ancient history, the faerie creatures (including the elves) created artifacts of great power. Items such as the elfstones are examples of their handiwork. In more recent history, the Druid Council at Paranor was fairly well versed in the construction of magic devices, such as the *Sword of Shannara* or the *Sword of Leah*.

Dungeon Masters: Think long and hard before introducing any artifact into your campaign; these seven legendary items might be unbalancing.

MAJOR ARTIFACTS of SHANNARA

The Sword of Shannara

During the Second War of the Races, the Elder Druid Bremen forged the *Sword of Shannara* for the sole purpose of slaying Brona, the Warlock Lord. The weapon was then bestowed to Jerle Shannara, who had recently ascended to the elven throne.

During the final battle, Brona was struck down and peace was restored to the Four Lands as the combined forces of the elves and dwarves scattered the remaining troll armies. After the war, the sword was entrusted to Bremen, and it lay untouched for centuries in the halls of Paranor before being needed again. It now lies in a vault in the city of Tyrsis.

The *Sword of Shannara* is a *+3 keen ghost touch bastard sword* that doesn't appear to be the least bit magical under normal circumstances. In fact, the blade has sometimes been disguised with cheap gilt to make it appear less a weapon of legendary power and more a rejected piece of decorative weaponry. When its truth power is activated, however, it is covered in a golden glow that acts as a *daylight* spell.

The primary purpose of the Sword is to uncover deception and reveal truth. Thus, all shapeshifters or polymorphed creatures touched by the blade are forced to resume their normal form (natural lycanthropes are forced into their hybrid forms), and they cannot alter their shape again for 1 hour. As long as the blade is drawn, the wielder can *discern lies* at will, and is immune to all glamers, patterns, and phantasms. The wielder gains a +10 morale bonus to saves against Illusion (shadow) spells, and is immune to other spells that use lies as their foundation. For example, the wielder is immune to all charm spells, as they instill the target with a false sense of trust, but he would still be susceptible to dominate spells, as they simply seize control of the target's body. The Sword can also dispel any figment automatically by touching it.

The most important function of the *Sword of Shannara* is to reveal the truth of both the wielder and the target. Undead creatures touched by the sword must make a Will save (DC 30). Undead that fail the save are permanently destroyed. If the wielder of the *Sword of Shannara* is unaware of this function of sword and attempts to use it as a mere magic blade instead of an implement of truth, the save DC of this ability is lowered to 20.

Drawbacks: The *Sword of Shannara* is an object of truth, and only someone who has accepted the truth about himself can wield it properly. When drawn, the wielder must immediately make a

Will save (DC 25). If the wielder fails the saving throw, he is stunned for 1 round. Success indicates that he has accepted the truth of himself and can wield the sword normally. The character must continue to make a saving throw each round for each point of Wisdom he has. Should he fail every saving throw, the truth has proven too difficult to bear, and the wielder goes temporarily insane and acts as though *confused*. Each day, the former wielder can make another Will save (DC 25) to regain his sanity. This unfortunate can never again use the *Sword of Shannara* to its fullest potential. In such a person's hands, the sword acts only as a masterwork bastard sword.

The Black Elfstone

This smooth, warm stone appears to be made of onyx. The *Black Elfstone*'s recorded history dates back as far as the Second War of the Races, when it was first discovered by Tay Trefenwyd, a Druid who followed Bremen. After the war, the *Black Elfstone* disappeared until it was found again by Walker Boh almost nine hundred years later and used to bring Paranor back to the land of the living. Unlike the *Blue Elfstones*, few scholars have ever sought to discover this dangerous artifact, and they strongly advise against anyone seeking the item.

The *Black Elfstone* can be used by any arcane spellcaster (who can cast at least 1st-level arcane spells), regardless of race. For some reason, elven blood is not a requirement, for the druid Allannon is known to have used it once, many ages ago. However, history has never recorded an instance when someone used the *Black Elfstone* without some knowledge of the arcane.

The *Black Elfstone* was created to destroy and devour all forms of magic. It draws its wielder to supernatural, detecting magic in a one-mile radius as the spell. It can also detect creatures of magical or faerie origin within the same area. The stone informs the user whether the magic detected is an item, creature, or effect, and the distance and direction toward the detected magical presences.

The *Black Elfstone* protects its owner against hostile magic. As long as the *Black Elfstone* is held in hand, the user is granted SR 35. Should an enemy spellcaster's level check fail by more than ten, the spell is reflected back at the caster.

The *Black Elfstone*'s ability to devour other magic is truly awesome. The user can attempt to attack a magical creature or item once per round. The attack takes the form of ray, so the user must make a ranged touch attack to successfully strike the target. The effect of the attack is dependent upon what type of target is struck. Any creature with magical, supernatural, or spell-like abilities must make a Fortitude save (DC 30). If the saving throw fails, the target loses all spellcasting, supernatural, and spell-like abilities for one day and suffers the effects of an

THE BLUE ELFSTONES (Minor Artifact)

The elfstones are a magical remnant of the ancient days when elven blood ran thick with magic. The *Blue Elfstones* come in sets of three: one representing the heart, one the mind, and one the body. The Elfstones appear to be small, smooth, bright blue pebbles. There are many references to elfstones in ancient elven myth, and modern scholars agree that these non-specific references likely refer to the *Blue Elfstones*. From this, many such scholars have hypothesized that there are, or were, more than a single set of *Blue Elfstones*. Legends indicate that as many as five sets existed at one time, and many scholars have spent their lives trying to discover the fate of the four lost sets. The only set of elfstones now known to exist were the hereditary property of the Ohmsford family, descendants of the elven house of Shannara. The *Blue Elfstones* were later transferred into the care of the current ruling house of the elves: the Elessedils.

To be used, all three elfstones must be held in one hand. Anyone trying to use an incomplete set fails and suffers the drawbacks listed below. The elfstones cannot be used by non-elves, and half-elves have a 50% chance of failure whenever using them. Should the elfstones fail to activate when their owner attempts to invoke them, all subsequent attempts to use them fail for the next hour. Whether the elfstones function or not, each attempt to use them exposes the owner to the risks mentioned below.

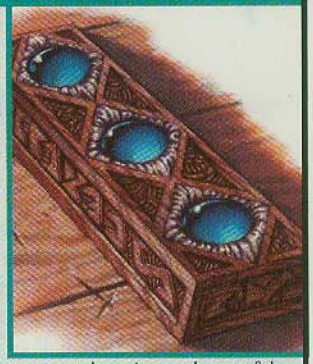
The *Blue Elfstones* were designed to prevent their owners from ever becoming lost, and the owner can use the spells *discern location* or *find the path* at will. Each spell is cast as by 20th-level spellcaster. When the use of these powers requires a visible manifestation to guide the user (such as with *find the path*), this display takes the form of a beam of brilliant blue light leading in the direction the character specified in the use of the ability.

The *Blue Elfstones* were also designed to protect their owners, but the ancient elven sorcerers who created them were concerned that in the wrong hands they might be used to wreak havoc upon the innocent. To prevent this from happening, they made certain the elfstones could only be used against magic creatures and objects.

The Elfstones' attack can be used against all creatures of the following types: Aberrations, Constructs, Dragons, Elementals, Fey, Magical Beasts, Monstrous Humanoids, Outsiders, Shapeshifters, and Undead. The elfstones cannot be used against Animals, Beasts, Giants, Humanoids, Oozes, Plants, or Vermin. The attack is a plane of white hot flames similar to a *burning hands* spell. This attack takes the form of a 40-foot-long semicircular burst of fire that deals 10d6 points of fire damage. Creatures in the area of effect can make a Reflex save (DC 20) to take half damage. The fire can affect incorporeal and ethereal creatures, and spell resistance does not apply. Attempting to use this attack when inappropriate targets are in the area of effect causes the attack to fail, and the owner immediately suffers all the drawbacks listed below.

The *Blue Elfstones* were designed to combat magical creatures and items, and all items carried by someone struck by the magical flames are at risk. The creature struck by the flames must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) for each item. Failure indicates that the item is destroyed. If the magic item has a better Reflex save, the item makes the saving throw. Artifacts are unaffected.

Drawbacks: Anyone who attempts



to use such ancient and powerful magic risks suffering the consequences, regardless of whether the item functions properly. Someone who attempts to use the *Blue Elfstones* must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) for each Elfstone. Elves received a +4 bonus to this save, and half-elves receive a +2 bonus. Should the save against the stone of the heart fail, the user suffers 2 points of permanent Charisma drain. Should the save against the stone of the mind fail, the user suffers 2 points of permanent Intelligence drain. Should the save against the stone of the body fail, the user suffers 2 points of permanent Constitution drain.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* —.

energy drain spell as if cast by a 20th-level wizard. A successful save indicates the creature or object takes only 10d10 points of damage, half of which is fire damage, the other half of which is negative energy damage. If the target is a non-magical item or creature, it suffers the effects of the *energy drain* power on a failed save, and only the damage on a successful save.

The *Black Elfstone* does not simply destroy that which is magical, it steals magic and recycles it. The user of the *Black Elfstone* gains all the supernatural and spell-like abilities of any creature drained. Likewise the user gains the ability to simulate the effects of any magic item devoured. For example, should someone use the *Black Elfstone* to devour a *wand of magic missiles* (3rd level) with 5 charges remaining, she could cast *magic missile* five times at the same caster level as that of the wand. Magic armor and weapons give their enhancement bonuses to the user's natural attacks and AC; as always, only the highest enhancement bonus is used. Permanent abilities drained in this fashion are permanently added to the *Black Elfstone*'s user; spell effects expire after their normal duration.

Drawbacks: The *Black Elfstone* is possibly the most powerful artifact within the Four Lands, and someone who uses it in pursuit of personal power would be a force to be reckoned with, were it not for the horrendous price of each use. Although the *Black Elfstone* devours magic, it also corrupts the user. Each creature devoured becomes a part of whoever holds the elfstone. Thus, using it to destroy a pit fiend would grant the user incredible power, but would also bring the pit fiend's evil into the user's soul. Each time the Elfstone is used, the user must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 20). Should the saving throw fail, the strain on the wielder's mind has proven to be too much for her, and she goes permanently insane, per the *insanity* spell cast by a 20th-level spellcaster.

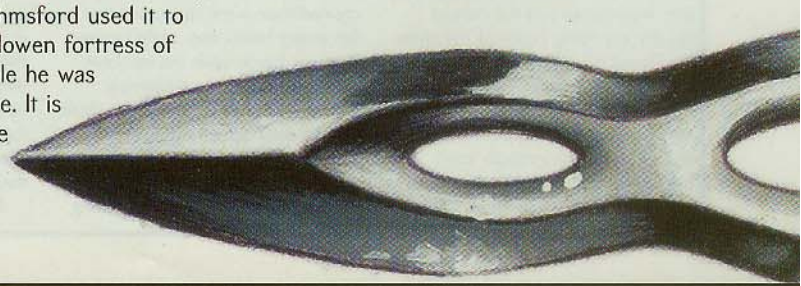
The Mirrorshroud

The *Mirrorshroud* is a powerful cloak woven from strands of pure darkness. The cloak is so dark, in fact, that it grants a +5 circumstance bonus on all Hide checks. Rimmer Dall, the most powerful shadowen, crafted this cloak. Little is known of the cloak's history, although Coll Ohmsford used it to escape the shadowen fortress of Southwatch while he was imprisoned there. It is believed that the *Sword of Shannara* destroyed the *Mirrorshroud*, but that has never been confirmed.

The *Mirrorshroud*'s primary purpose was to allow shadowen to get close to a target without being detected. Thus, the *Mirrorshroud* automatically cloaks the wearers in an illusion (glamer), making him appear to all who view him as a trusted companion. Should more than one person be encountered, the wearer selects a target. He appears as a trusted companion of that individual. When the wearer and a target first meet, the target must make a successful Will save (DC 30) to realize the wearer is not his friend. Creatures immune to illusion are immune to this ability of the *Mirrorshroud*, and spells such as *true seeing* can penetrate the disguise.

A failed save indicates that the wearer of the *Mirrorshroud* is virtually indistinguishable from the target's friend, as the *Mirrorshroud* alters his appearance, voice, mannerisms, and so on. The cloak gives its wearer insight into how to respond verbally to anyone encountered by giving him a limited form of mind-reading. Essentially, the wearer can glean enough information from someone's mind to vaguely answer any questions intended to verify the wearer's identity.

Drawbacks: The *Mirrorshroud* was constructed with powerful shadowen magic; it was made to be worn by shadowen. Any non-shadowen who wears the *Mirrorshroud* takes the risk that he might, eventually, become one. Each day, a non-shadowen wearer must make a Will save (DC 20). Should the save fail once, the wearer becomes obsessed with the cloak, refusing to remove it at any time. A second failure means that the wearer begins to change, gaining all the abilities of a shadowen (see The Bestiary). The wearer's alignment also changes to lawful evil. There is little that can be done at this point to save the wearer other than to destroy the *Mirrorshroud*. Should the wearer fail the save a third time, even the destruction of the *Mirrorshroud* cannot save him.



THE SWORD OF LEAH (Minor Artifact)

The *Sword of Leah* was crafted to aid Rone Leah in protecting Brin Ohmsford as the pair traveled in the company of Allannon. The sword was nothing more than a non-magical relic carried by the prince of Leah until its blade was dipped in the swirling waters of the deadly Hadeshorn and then purified by druid fire (see the Elder Druid prestige class on page 40). Since that day, the blade has carried a powerful enchantment, summoning white-hot flames to strike down those monsters that dare stand against its wielder.

The *Sword of Leah* is a *+4 ghost touch, wounding greatsword of flaming burst, bane vs. evil outsiders.* Three times per day, the wielder can invoke *fire shield* as an 18th-level spellcaster. The wielder of the Sword of Leah must be aware of the nature of the weapon to gain access to these abilities. In the hands of someone ignorant of the sword's capabilities, it is merely a masterwork greatsword. In addition, the weapon only exhibits its magical nature at the will of its wielder. That is, if the wielder doesn't wish to use the magic of the sword, he can simply wield it as a masterwork greatsword. However, if he has knowledge of the power of the sword and wishes to use its full potential, he can do so at will.

It is unlikely, but possible, that another such sword could be forged. Such a task would require an individual capable of summoning the druid fire or something quite similar.

Drawbacks: Using the Sword of Leah is highly addictive. Each time its powers are called upon, the wielder must make a Will save (DC 16) or be unable to release its magic. The wielder then becomes unwilling to put down or even sheathe the sword, refuses to follow a course that doesn't involve immediate combat, and will attack anyone who tries to take the weapon from him by force. The wielder will not eat, drink, or sleep, and often stops fighting only if he goes unconscious from exhaustion or is slain.

Those the wielder still perceives as allies can attempt to talk the wielder down from this manic behavior, giving him another Will save with a +4 circumstance bonus each time a rational suggestion is made as to why the wielder would benefit from putting up the blade (DM's discretion). In this state, the wielder also attacks recklessly, gaining a +2 bonus to all attacks, but suffering a -2 penalty to AC.

Caster Level: 18th; *Weight:* 15 lb.

The Stiehl

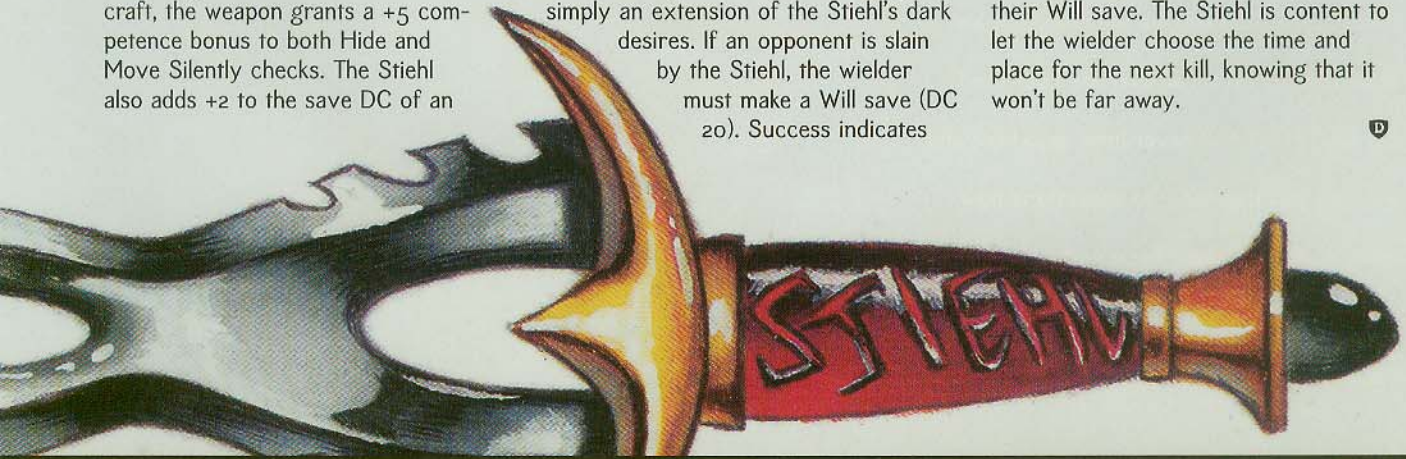
The Stiehl is one of the most lethal assassin's tools ever made. The actual creator of the blade is unknown, but it is assumed that it was crafted for a professional killer. The blade is best known as the weapon of the formidable Pe Ell, an assassin who was often found in the employ of Rimmer Dall. Pe Ell found the Stiehl in a cavern when he was a young man. With the Stiehl, Pe Ell went on to become one of the most successful assassins in the Four Lands.

The Stiehl is a *+4 keen dagger of life stealing.* When it deals a critical hit, it bestows a negative level on its victim. The wielder of the Stiehl gains 1d6 temporary hit points each time a negative level is bestowed on another. These temporary hit points last for 24 hours. The blade glows silver and sheds *light,* as the spell, at will. The wielder can also invoke *cat's grace* three times per day as a 3rd-level caster. Since the Stiehl was designed to aid assassins in their craft, the weapon grants a +5 competence bonus to both Hide and Move Silently checks. The Stiehl also adds +2 to the save DC of an assassin's death attack ability.

The Stiehl's most powerful ability is its bane ability. This ability functions just as listed in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide,* with one exception. Each morning, the wielder can choose which creature type the bane ability affects. For the next 24 hours, the Stiehl grants an additional +2 bonus to attacks against that creature type and deals +2d6 points of bonus damage.

Drawbacks: The Stiehl is an evil intelligent weapon (CE, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 18) that can communicate empathically with its wielder. However, it does not radiate evil to any sort of detection spell (*detect evil, true seeing,* and so on). This effect acts as a *nondetection* spell cast by a 20th-level spellcaster.

The Stiehl's corrupting influence is insidious. Above all else, the Stiel hungers for more victims and more blood. Each time the wielder slays a creature with the Stiehl, he runs the risk of losing himself and becoming simply an extension of the Stiehl's dark desires. If an opponent is slain by the Stiehl, the wielder must make a Will save (DC 20). Success indicates the wielder feels nothing more than an immense satisfaction over the kill, which seems to radiate from the blade. Characters of good alignment will immediately realize the artifact as a weapon of evil. Those who fail their saving throw become a slave to the Stiehl's will, and they are compelled to immediately begin looking for another victim to sate the Stiehl's bloodlust (treat this as if the wielder had fallen victim to a *dominate monster* spell cast by an 18th-level caster). This effect lasts as long as the wielder carries the Stiehl, or for an hour after the weapon is (forcibly) removed from the wielder's possession. Thus, most wielders of the Stiehl eventually meet a bloody end as the people they prey upon take notice and band together to hunt the maniac down. Wielders of the Stiehl who the blade has recognized as killers already (typically of those of evil alignment who do not hesitate to kill on a whim) are not compelled, even if they fail their Will save. The Stiehl is content to let the wielder choose the time and place for the next kill, knowing that it won't be far away.

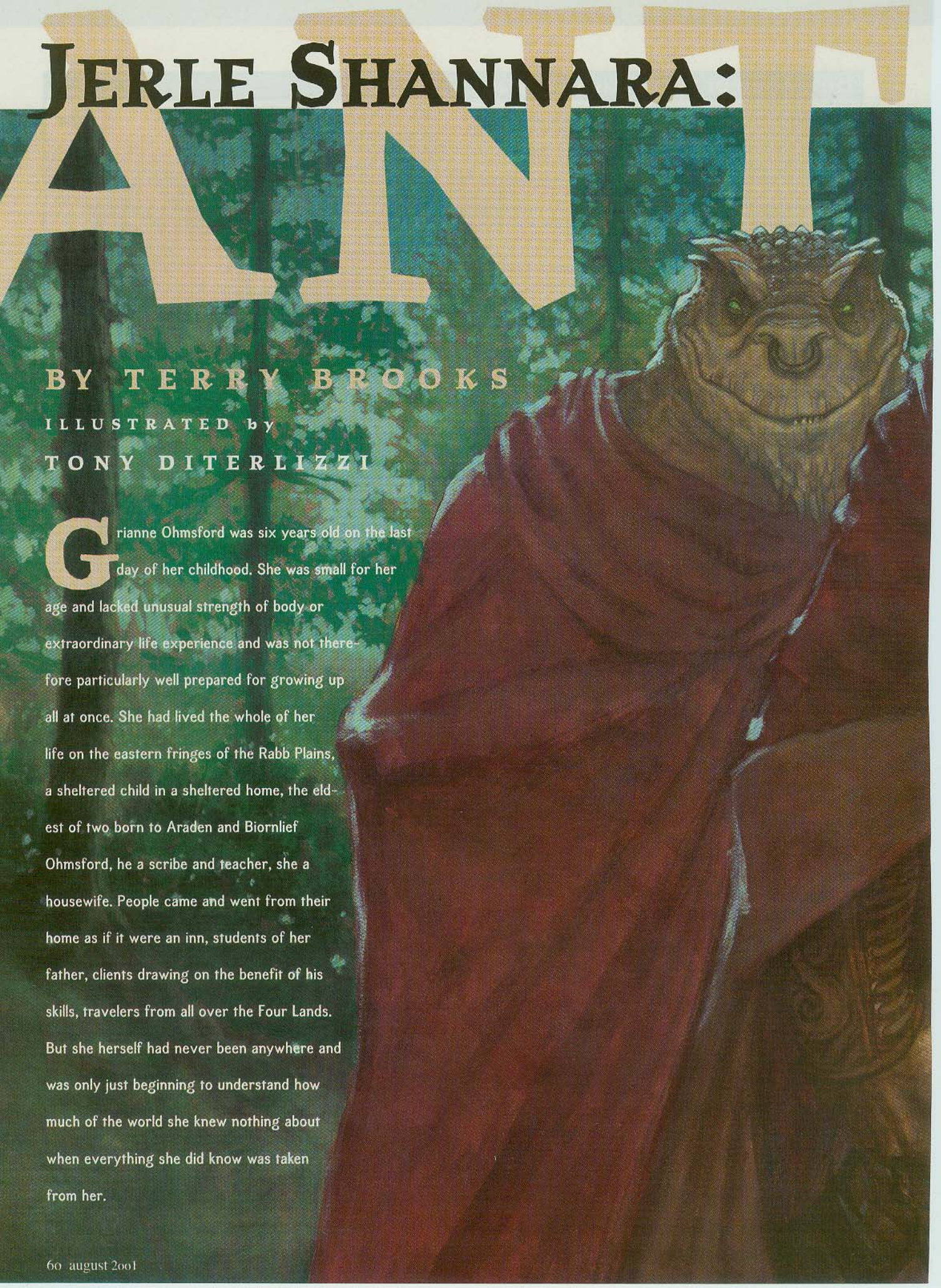


JERLE SHANNARA: ANTI

BY TERRY BROOKS

ILLUSTRATED by

TONY DITERLIZZI



Grianne Ohmsford was six years old on the last day of her childhood. She was small for her age and lacked unusual strength of body or extraordinary life experience and was not therefore particularly well prepared for growing up all at once. She had lived the whole of her life on the eastern fringes of the Rabb Plains, a sheltered child in a sheltered home, the eldest of two born to Araden and Biornlief Ohmsford, he a scribe and teacher, she a housewife. People came and went from their home as if it were an inn, students of her father, clients drawing on the benefit of his skills, travelers from all over the Four Lands. But she herself had never been anywhere and was only just beginning to understand how much of the world she knew nothing about when everything she did know was taken from her.

RAX

An exclusive excerpt from the new novel.

It was her gift of magic and her understanding

While she was unremarkable in appearance and there was nothing about her on the surface of things that would suggest she could survive any sort of life-altering trauma, the truth of the matter was that she was strong and able in unexpected ways. Some of this showed in her startling blue eyes, which pinned you with their directness and pierced you through to your soul. Strangers who made the mistake of staring into them found themselves glancing quickly away. She did not speak to these men and women or seem to take anything away from her encounters, but she left them with a sense of having given something up anyway. Wandering her home and yard, long dark hair hanging loose, a waif seemingly at a loss for something to do or somewhere to go, or just sitting alone in a corner while the adults talked among themselves, she claimed her own space and kept it inviolate.

She was tough-minded, as well, a stubborn and intractable child who once her mind was set on something refused to let it be changed. For a time her parents could do so by virtue of their relationship and the usual threats and enticements, but eventually they found themselves incapable of influencing her. She seemed to find her identity in making a stand on matters, by holding forth in challenge and accepting whatever came her way as a result. Frequently it was a stern lecture and banishment to her room, but often it was simply denial of something others thought would benefit her. Whatever the case, she did not seem to mind the consequences and was more apt to be bothered by capitulation to their wishes.

But at the core of everything was her heritage, which manifested itself in ways that hadn't been apparent for generations. She knew early on that she was not like her parents or their friends or anyone else she knew. She was a throwback to the most famous members of her family—to Brin and Jair and Par and Coll Ohmsford, to whom she could directly trace her ancestry. Her parents explained it to her early on, almost as soon as her talent revealed itself. She was born with the magic of the wishsong, a latent power that surfaced in the Ohmsford family bloodline only once in every four or five generations. Wish for it, sing for it, and it would come to pass. Anything was possible. The wishsong hadn't been present in an Ohmsford in her parents' lifetimes, and so neither of them had any firsthand experience with how it worked. But they knew the stories, had been told them repeatedly by their own parents, the tales of the magic carried down from the time of the great Queen Wren, another of their ancestors. So they knew enough to recognize what it meant when their child could bend the stalks of flowers and turn aside an angry dog simply by singing.

Her use of the wishsong was rudimentary and undisciplined at first, and she did not understand that it was special. In her child's mind, it seemed reasonable that everyone would possess it. Her parents worked to help her realize its worth, to harness its power, and to learn to keep it secret from others. Grianne was a smart girl, and she understood quickly what it meant to have something others would covet or fear if they knew she possessed it. She listened to her parents about this, although she paid less attention to their warnings about the ways it should be used and the purposes to which it should be put. She knew enough to show them what they expected of her and to hide from them what they did not.

So on the last day of her childhood she had already come to terms with having use of the magic. She had constructed defenses to its demands and subterfuges to her parents' refusals to let her fully test its limits. Wrapped in the armor of her strong-minded determination and stubborn insistence, she had built a fortress in which she wielded the wishsong with a sense of impunity. Her child's world was already more complex and devious than that of many adults, and she was learning the importance of never giving away everything of who and what she was. It was her gift of magic and her understanding of its workings that saved her.

At the same time, and through no fault of her own, it was what doomed her parents and younger brother.

She knew there was something wrong with her child's world some weeks before that last day. It manifested itself in small ways, things that her parents and others could not readily detect. There were oddities in the air—smells and tastes and sounds that whispered of a hidden presence and dark emotions. She caught glimpses of shadows on the vibrations of her voice that returned to her when she used the magic of her song. She felt changes in heat and cold that came only when she was threatened, except that always before she could trace their source and this time she could not. Once or twice, she sensed the closeness of dark-cloaked forms, perhaps the shape-shifters she had found out on several occasions before, always hidden and out of reach, but there nevertheless.

She said nothing to her parents of these things because she had no solid evidence of them and only suspicion on which to buttress her complaints. Even so, she kept close watch. Her home was at the edge of a grove of maple trees and looked out across the flat, green threshold of the Rabb all the way to the foothills of the Dragon's Teeth. While nothing could approach out of the west without being visible from a long way off, forests and hills shielded the other three quadrants. She scouted them from time to time, a precaution undertaken to give her a sense of security. But whatever watched was careful, and she never found it out. It hid from her, avoided her, moved away when she approached, and always returned. She could feel its eyes on her even as she looked for it. It was clever and skilled; it was accustomed to staying hidden when others would find it out.

She should have been afraid, but she had not been raised with fear and had no reason to appreciate its uses. For her, fear was an annoyance she sought to banish and did not heed. She asked her father finally if there was anyone who would wish to hurt her, or him, or her mother or brother, but he only smiled and said they had nothing anyone would want that would provide reason for harm. He said it in a calm, assured way, a teacher imparting knowledge to a student, and she did not believe he could be wrong.

When the black-cloaked figures finally came, they did so just before dawn, when the light was so pale and thin that it barely etched the edges of the shadows. They killed the dog, old Bark, when he wandered out for a look, an act that demonstrated unmistakably the nature of their dark intent.

of its workings that saved her.

She was awake by then, alerted by some inner voice tied to her magic, hurrying through the rooms of her home on cat's paws, searching for the danger that was already at the door. Her family was alone that morning, all of the travelers either come and gone or still on their way, and there was no one to stand with them in the face of their peril.

Grianne never hesitated when she caught sight of the shadowy forms sliding past the windows. She sensed the presence of danger all around, a circle of iron blades closing with inexorable purpose. She yelled for her father and ran back to her bedroom, where her brother lay sleeping. She snatched him up without a word, hugging him to her. Soft and warm, he was barely two years old. She carried him from the room and down into the earthen cellar where perishable foodstuffs were kept. Above, her parents sought to cover her flight. The sounds of breaking glass and splintering wood erupted, and she could hear her father's angry shouts and oaths. He was a brave man, and he would stand and fight. But it would not be enough; she sensed that much already. She released a catch and pulled back the shelving section that hid the entrance to the cramped storm shelter they had never used. She placed her sleeping brother on a pallet inside. She stared down at him for a moment, at his tiny face and balled fists, at his sleeping form, hearing the shouts and oaths overhead turn to screams of pain and anguish, aware of tears flooding her eyes.

Black smoke was seeping through the floorboards when she slipped from the shelter and sealed the entry behind her. She heard the crackle of flames consuming wood. Her parents gone, the intruders would come for her, but she would be quicker and more clever than they expected. She would escape them, and once she was safely away, outside in the pale dawn light, she would run the five miles to the next closest home and return with help for her brother.

She heard the black-cloaked forms searching for her as she hurried along a short passageway to a cellar door that led directly outside. Outside, the door was concealed by bushes and seldom used; it was not likely they would think to find her there. If they did, they would be sorry. She already knew the sort of damage the wishsong could cause. She was a child, but she was not helpless. She blinked away her tears and set her jaw. They would find that out one day. They would find that out when she hurt them the same way they were hurting her.

Then she was through the door and outside in the brightening dawn light, crouched in the bushes. Smoke swirled about her in dark clouds, and she felt the heat of the fire as it climbed the walls of her home. Everything was being taken from her, she thought in despair. Everything that mattered.

A sudden movement to one side drew her attention. When she turned to look, a hand wrapped in a foul-smelling cloth closed over her face and sent her spiraling downward into blackness.

When she awoke, she was bound, gagged, and blindfolded, and she could not tell where she was or who held her captive or even if it was day or night. She was carried over a thick shoulder like a sack of wheat, but her captors did not speak. There were more than one; she could hear their footsteps, heavy and certain. She could hear their breathing. She thought about her home and parents. She thought about her brother. The tears came anew, and she began to sob. She had failed them all.

She was carried for a long time, then laid upon the ground and left alone. She squirmed in an effort to free herself, but the bonds were too tightly knotted. She was hungry and thirsty, and a cold desperation was creeping through her. There could be only one reason she had been taken captive, one reason she was needed when her parents and brother were not. Her wishsong. She was alive and they were dead because of her legacy. She was the one with the magic. She was the one who was special. Special enough that her family was killed so that she could be stolen away. Special enough to cause everything she loved and cared for to be taken from her.

There was a commotion not long after that, sudden and unexpected, filled with new sounds of battle and angry cries. They seemed to be coming from all around her. Then she was snatched from the ground and carried off, leaving the sounds behind. The one who carried her now cradled her while running, holding her close, as if to soothe her fear and desperation. She curled into her rescuer's arms, burrowed as if stricken, for such was the depth of her need.

When they were alone in a silent place, the bonds and gag and blindfold were removed. She sat up and found herself facing a big man wrapped in black robes, a man who was not entirely human, his face scaly and mottled like a snake's, his fingers ending in claws, and his eyes lidless slits. She caught her breath and shrank from him, but he did not move away in response.

"You are safe now, little one," he whispered. "Safe from those who would harm you, from the Dark Uncle and his kind."

She did not know whom he was talking about. She looked around guardedly. They were crouched in a forest, the trees stark sentinels on all sides, their branches confining amid a sea of sunshine that dappled the woodland earth like gold dust. There was no one else around, and nothing of what she saw looked familiar.

"There is no reason to be afraid of me," the other said. "Are you frightened by how I look?"

She nodded warily, swallowing against the dryness in her throat.

He handed her a water skin, and she drank gratefully. "Do not be afraid. I am of mixed breed, both Man and Mwellret, little one. I look scary, but I am your friend. I was the one who saved you from those others. From the Dark Uncle and his shape-shifters."

That was twice he had mentioned the Dark Uncle. "Who is he?" she asked. "Is he the one who hurt us?"

"He is a Druid. Walker is his name. He is the one who attacked your home and killed your parents and your brother." The reptilian eyes fixed on her. "Think back. You will remember seeing his face."

To her surprise, she did. She saw it clearly, a glimpse of it as it passed a window in the thin dawn light, dusky skin and

"What would you know of dark intentions, little

"What has life shown you that would give you the right

black beard, eyes so piercing they stripped you bare, dark brow creased with frown lines. She saw him, knew him for her enemy, and felt a rage of such intensity she thought she might burn from the inside out.

Then she was crying, thinking of her parents and her brother, of her home and her lost world. The man across from her drew her gently into his arms and held her close.

"You cannot go back," he told her. "They will be searching for you. They will never give up while they think you are alive."

She nodded into his shoulder. "I hate them," she said in a thin, sharp wail.

"Yes, I know," he whispered. "You are right to hate them." His rough, guttural voice tightened. "But listen to me, little one. I am the Morgawr. I am your father and mother now. I am your family. I will help you to find a way to gain revenge for what has been taken from you. I will teach you to ward yourself against everything that might hurt you. I will teach you to be strong."

He whisked her away, lifting her as if she weighed nothing, and carried her deeper into the woods to where a giant bird waited. He called the bird a Shrike, and she flew on its back with him to another part of the Four Lands, one dark and solitary and empty of sound and life. He cared for her as he said he would, trained her in mind and body, and kept her safe. He told her more of the Druid Walker, of his scheming and his hunger for power, of his long-sought goal of dominance over all the Races in all the lands. He showed her images of the Druid and his black-cloaked servants, and he kept her anger fired and alive within her child's breast.

"Never forget what he has stolen from you," he would repeat. "Never forget what you are owed for his betrayal."

After a time he began to teach her to use the wishsong as a weapon against which no one could stand—not once she had mastered it and brought it under her control, not once she had made it so much a part of her that its use seemed second nature. He taught her that even a slight change in pitch or tone could alter health to sickness and life to death. A Druid had such power, he told her. The Druid Walker in particular. She must learn to be a match for him. She must learn to use her magic to overcome his.

After a while she thought no longer of her parents and her brother, whom she knew to be dead and lost to her forever; they were no more than bones buried in the earth, a part of a past forever lost, of a childhood erased in a single day. She gave herself over to her new life and to her mentor, her teacher, and her friend. The Morgawr was all those while she grew through adolescence, all those and much more. He was the shaper of her thinking and the navigator of her life. He was the inspiration for her magic's purpose and the keeper of her dreams of righting the wrongs she had suffered.

He called her his little Ilse Witch, and she took the name for her own. She buried her given name with her past, and she never used it again.

Her memories of the past, already faded and tattered, fell away in an instant's time as she stood in a woodland clearing a thousand miles from her lost home and confronted the boy who claimed he was her brother.

"Grianne, it's Bek," he insisted. "Don't you remember?"

She remembered everything, of course, although no longer as clearly and sharply, no longer as painfully. She remembered, but she refused to believe that her memories could be brought to life with such painful clarity after so many years. She hadn't heard her name spoken in all that time, hadn't spoken it herself, had barely even thought of it. She was the Ilse Witch, and that name defined who and what she was, and not the other. The other was for when she had achieved her revenge over the Druid, for when she had gained sufficient recognition and power that when it was spoken next, it would never again be forgotten by anyone.

But here was this slip of a boy speaking it now, daring to suggest that he had a right to do so. She stared at him in disbelief and smoldering anger. Could he really be her brother? Could he be Bek, alive in spite of what she had believed for so long? Was it possible? She tried to make sense of the idea, to find a way to address it, to form words to speak in response. But everything she thought to say or do was jumbled and incoherent, refusing to be organized in a useful way. Everything froze as if chained and locked, leaving her so frustrated with her inability to act that she could barely keep herself from screaming.

"No!" she shouted finally. A single word, spoken like an oath offered up against demon spawn, it escaped her lips when nothing else dared.

"Grianne," he said, more softly now.

She saw the mop of dark brown hair and the startling blue eyes, so like her own, so familiar to her. He had her build and looks. He had something else, as well, something she had yet to define, but was unmistakably there. He could be Bek.

But how? How could he be Bek?

"Bek is dead," she hissed at him, her slender body rigid within the dark robes.

On the ground to one side, a small bundle of clothing and shadows, Ryer Ord Star knelt, head lowered in the veil of her long silver hair, hands clasped in her lap. She had not moved since the Ilse Witch had appeared out of the night, had not lifted her head an inch or spoken a single word. In the silence and darkness, she might have been a statue carved of stone and set in place by her maker to ward a traveler's place of rest.

The Ilse Witch's eyes passed over her in a heartbeat and fell upon the boy. "Say something!" she hissed anew. "Tell me why I should believe you!"

"I was saved by a shape-shifter called Truls Rohk," he answered finally, his gaze on her steady. "I was taken to the Druid Walker, who in turn took me to the people who raised me as their son. But I am Bek."

"You could not know any of this! You were only two when I hid you in that cellar!" She caught herself. "When I hid my brother. But my brother is dead, and you are a liar!"

"I was told most of it," he admitted. "I don't remember anything of how I was saved. But look at me, Grianne. Look at us! You can't mistake the resemblance, how much alike we are. We have the same eyes and coloring. We're brother and

sister! Don't you feel it?"

She advanced a step. "Why would a shape-shifter save you when it was shape-shifters who killed my parents and took me prisoner? Why would the Druid save you when he sought to imprison me?"

The boy was already shaking his head slowly, deliberately, his blue eyes intense, his young face determined. "No, Grianne, it wasn't the shape-shifters or the Druid who killed our parents and took you away. They were never your enemies. Don't you realize the truth yet? Think about it, Grianne."

"I saw his face!" she screamed in fury. "I saw it through a window, a glimpse, passing in the dawn light, just before the attack, before I . . ."

She trailed off, wondering suddenly, unexpectedly, if she could have been mistaken. Had she seen the Druid as the Morgawr had insisted, when he told her to think back, so certain she would? How could he have known what she would see? The implication of what it would mean if she had deceived herself was staggering. She brushed it away violently, but it coiled up in a corner of her memory, a snake still easily within reach.

"We are Ohmsfords, Grianne," the boy continued softly. "But so is Walker. We share the same heritage. He comes from the same bloodline as we do. He is one of us. He has no reason to do us harm."

"None that you could fathom, it appears!" She laughed derisively. "What would you know of dark intentions, little boy? What has life shown you that would give you the right to suppose your insight into such things is better than mine?"

"Nothing." He seemed momentarily at a loss for words, but his face spoke of his need to find them. "I haven't lived your life, I know. But I'm not naive about what it must have been like."

Her patience slipped a notch. "I think you believe what you are telling me," she told him coldly. "I think you have been carefully schooled to believe it. But you are a dupe and a tool of clever men. Druids and shape-shifters make their way in the world by deceiving others. They must have looked long and hard to find you, a boy who looks so much like Bek would look at your age. They must have congratulated themselves on their good fortune."

"How did I come to have his name, then?" the boy snapped in reply. "If I'm not your brother, how do I have his name? It is the name I was given, the name I have always had!"

"Or at least, that is what you believe. A Druid can make you embrace lies with little more than a thought, even lies about yourself." She shook her head reprovingly. "You are sadly deceived, to believe as you do, to think yourself a dead boy. I should destroy you on the spot, but perhaps that is what the Druid is hoping I will do, what he wants me to do. Perhaps he thinks it will somehow damage me if I kill a boy who looks so like my brother. Tell me where the Druid waits, and I will spare you."

The boy stared at her in horror. "You are the one who is deceived, Grianne. So much so that you will tell yourself anything to keep the truth at bay."

"Where is the Druid?" she snapped, her face contorting angrily. "Tell me now!"

He took a deep breath, straightening. "I've come a long way for this meeting. Too far to be intimidated into giving up what I know is true and right. I am your brother. I am Bek. Grianne–"

"Don't call me that!" she screamed. Her gray robes billowed from her body and she threw up her arms in fury, almost as if to smother his words, to bury them along with her past. She felt her temper slipping, her grip on herself sliding away like metal on oiled metal, and the raw power of her voice took on an edge that could easily cut to ribbons anything or anyone against which it was directed. "Don't speak my name again!"

He stood his ground. "What name should I speak? Ilse Witch? Should I call you what your enemies call you? Should I treat you as they do, as a creature of dark magic and evil intent, as someone I can never be close to or care about or want to see become my sister again?"

He seemed to gain strength with every new word, and suddenly she saw him as more dangerous than she had believed. "Be careful, boy."

"You are the one who needs to be careful!" he snapped. "Of who and what you believe! Of everything you have embraced since the moment you were taken from our home. Of the lies in which you have cloaked yourself!"

He pointed at her suddenly. "We are alike in more ways than you think. Not everything that links us is visible to the eye. Grianne Ohmsford has her magic, her birthright, now the tool of the Ilse Witch. But I have that magic, too! Do you hear it in my voice? You do, don't you? I'm not as practiced as you, and I only just discovered it was there, but it is another link in our lives, Grianne, another part of the heritage we share–"

She felt his voice taking on an edge similar to her own, a biting touch that caused her to flinch in spite of herself and to bring her defenses up instantly.

"–just as we share the same parents, the same fate, the same journey of discovery, brought about by a search for the treasure hidden in the ruins that lie inland from here . . ."

She brought her voice up in a low, vibrant hum, a soft blending with the night sounds, faint and sibilant, leaves rustling in the breeze, insects chirping and buzzing, birds winging past as swift shadows, the breath of living things. Her decision was made in an instant, quick and hard; he was too dangerous for her to let live, whoever or whatever he was. Too dangerous for her to ignore as she had thought to do. He had something of magic about him after all, magic not unlike her own. It was what she had sensed about him earlier and been unable to define, hidden before but present now in the sound of his voice, a whisper of possibility.

Put an end to him, she warned herself.

Put an end to him at once!

Then something shimmered to one side, drawing her attention from the boy. She struck at it without thinking, the magic escaping from her in a rush of iron shards and razored bits that cut through the air and savaged her intended target without pause or effort. But the shimmer had moved another way. Again, the Ilse Witch struck at it, her voice a weapon of such power that it shattered the silence,

whipped the leaves of the surrounding trees as if they were caught in a violent wind, and left voiceless and wide-eyed in shock the boy who had been speaking.

An instant later, he disappeared. It happened so quickly and unexpectedly that it was done before the Ilse Witch could act to stop it. She blinked at the empty space in which he had stood, seeing the brightness take on shape and form anew, becoming a series of barely recognizable movements that crossed through the night like shadows vaguely human in form chasing one another. She lashed out at them in surprise, but she was too slow and her attack too misdirected to catch more than empty air.

She wheeled this way and that, searching for what had deceived her so completely. Whatever it was, it was gone and it had taken the boy with it. Her first impulse was to give pursuit. But first impulses were seldom wise, and she did not give in to this one. She scanned the empty clearing, then the surrounding forest, searching with her senses for traces of the boy's rescuer. It took her only a moment to discover its identity. A shape-shifter. She had sensed its presence before, she realized—on Black Moclips, after the nighttime collision with the Jerle Shannara. It was the same creature and no mistake. It must have come aboard during the confusion to spy on her, then remained hidden for the remainder of the voyage. That could not have been easy, given the intensity of her control over ship's quarters and crew. This particular shape-shifter was skilled and experienced, a veteran of such efforts, and not in the least awed by her.

A new rage built in her. It must have followed her from the ship to the clearing, revealing itself when it believed the boy in danger. Did it know the boy? Or the Druid? Did it serve either or both? She believed it must. Otherwise, why would it involve itself in this business at all? A protector for the boy then? Perhaps. If so, it would confirm what she had believed from the beginning, from the moment the boy had tried to trick her into thinking he might be Bek. The Druid had concocted an elaborate scheme to undermine her confidence in her mission and her trust in the Morgawr, to sabotage their relationship, and to render her vulnerable so that he might find a way to destroy her before she could destroy him.

She clenched her hands before her, fingers knotting until the knuckles turned white. She should have killed the boy at once, the moment he spoke her name! She should have used the wishsong to burn him alive, waiting for him to beg her to save him, to admit to his lies! She should never have listened to anything he said!

Yet now that she had, she couldn't shake the feeling that she shouldn't dismiss him too quickly.

She turned the matter over in her mind carefully, examining it anew. The resemblance between them could be explained away, of course. A boy who looked like her could be found easily enough. Nor would it be all that hard for Walker to make the boy think he was Bek, even to think he had always been called Bek. Duping him into believing he was her brother and somehow her rescuer was certainly within the Druid's capabilities. It was reasonable to believe that he had been brought along on the voyage solely for the purpose of somehow, somewhere encountering her and acting out his part.

But . . .

Her pale, luminous face lifted and her blue eyes stared off into the night. There, at the end, when he had lost his patience with her, when he had challenged her as no one else would dare to do, not even the Morgawr, something about him had reminded her of herself. A conviction, a certainty that registered in his words and his posture, in the directness and intensity of his gaze. But more than this, she had sensed something unexpected and familiar in his tone of voice, something that could not be mistaken for anything other than what it was. He had told her, but in the heat of the moment she had not believed him, thinking only that he was threatening her, that he could do damage to her in an unexpected way, and so she must protect herself. But it had been there nevertheless.

He had the magic of the wishsong, her magic, her power duplicated.

Who but her brother or another Ohmsford would possess power like that?

The contradiction of what seemed to be true and what seemed to be a lie frustrated and confused her. She wanted to explain the boy away with no further consideration, but she could not do so. There was in him enough of real magic to cause her to wonder at his true identity, even if she did not believe him to be Bek. The Druid could do many things in creating a tool with which to deceive her, but he could not instill another with magic, and particularly not with magic of this sort.

So who was the boy and what was the truth of him?

She knew what she should do; it was what she had come all this way to do. Find the treasure that was hidden in Castledown and make it her own. Find the Druid and destroy him. Regain the safety of Black Moclips and sail home again as swiftly as possible and be shed of this voyage and its dangers.

But the boy intrigued and disturbed her, so much so that almost without understanding why, she was rethinking her plans entirely. Despite what she knew of his duplicity, whether willing or not, she was loath to give up on solving the mystery of him when so much of what she discovered might impact her. Not in any life-altering manner, of course; she had already made her mind up to that. But in some smaller, yet still important way.

How hard would it be to discover the truth about him, once she set her mind to it? How much time would it take?

The Morgawr would not approve, but he approved of little she did these days. Her relationship with her mentor had been deteriorating for some time. They no longer shared the student/teacher connection they once had. She was as much the master now as he was, and she chafed at the restrictions he constantly sought to place upon her. She had not forgotten what she owed him, was not ungrateful for all he had taught her over the years. But she disliked his insistence on keeping her in her place, always his subordinate, his underling, a charge who must do as he dictated. He was old, and perhaps because he was old he could no longer change as easily as could the young. Self-preservation was what mattered to him. But she did not aspire to live a thousand years. She did not consider near immortality a benefit to be sought.

Hence the need to get on with things, rather than sit and plot and wait and scheme, as he was so used to doing.

No, he would not approve, and in this case she would be wrong in failing to consider that. Seeking out the boy to solve his mystery and satisfy her curiosity was mere self-indulgence. She hesitated a moment, then brushed her hesitation aside. It was her decision to make, her choice if she wasted time that, in any case, belonged to her. The boy had something she needed, whether the Morgawr would agree with her or not. In any event, he was not here to advise her. Cree Bega would presume to speak for him, but the Mwellret's opinion meant next to nothing to her.

She would have to act quickly, however. The ret was not too far behind her, coming along with two dozen others. His approach was delayed only because, wishing to go ahead by herself, to have the first look at what waited, she had ordered him to wait. Perhaps, she added, to make certain he did not interfere with anything she decided she must do with what she found. Perhaps just to keep him in line, where he belonged.

She walked over to Ryer Ord Star and bent down, trying to determine if the seer was coming out of her trance. But the girl never moved, sitting silently, motionlessly in the night, head lowered in shadow, eyes closed. She was breathing steadily, calmly, so it was apparent her health was not in danger. What was she doing, though? Where inside herself had she gone?

The Ilse Witch knelt in front of the girl. She had no time to wait for the seer to conclude her meditations. She needed her answers. She placed her fingers on the other's temples, just as she had done with the castaway whose revelations had begun this whole matter, and she began to probe. The effort required was small. Ryer Ord Star's mind opened to her like a flower before the rising sun, her memories tumbling out like falling petals. Without a glance at most of them, the Ilse Witch went directly for those most recent, the ones that would reveal the fate of the Druid.

Revelations surfaced like the ocean's dead, stark and bare. She saw a battle within Old World ruins, a battle in which the Druid and his company were assaulted on all sides by lines of red fire that burned and seared. Walls shifted, raising from and lowering into smooth metal floors. Creepers appeared from nowhere, metal monsters on skittering legs with claws that rent and tore. Men fought and died in a swirl of thick smoke and spurts of fire. Seen through Ryer Ord Star's eyes, filtered through her emotions, everything was chaotic and awash in fear and desperation.

Amid the madness, the Druid advanced past lines of attack and changes in terrain, his steady, deliberate progress aided by his magic and buttressed by his courage and determination. Say what you would, the Druid had never been a coward. He fought his way into the heart of the ruins, shouting in vain for the others of his company to fall back, to flee, trying to keep them alive. At last he gained the doorway to a black tower, forced an entry, and disappeared inside.

Ryer Ord Star screamed and started after him, then was struck by the fire and sent pinwheeling into a wall. Her thoughts of the Druid faded, then went black.

The Ilse Witch took her fingers from the seer's temples and sat back on her heels, perplexed. Interesting.

The communication had come without words of any sort and with no resistance at all. Was this the nature of empaths, that they could neither dissemble nor conceal? She found herself wondering at the girl's pursuit of the Druid, galvanized by the latter's disappearance into the tower. Why would she risk herself so? The girl had been instructed to stay close to the Druid at all times, to make herself indispensable to him, to gain his confidence and his ear. Clearly she had done so. But was there something more between them, something that went beyond the charge she had been given as the Ilse Witch's spy?

There was no way to know. Not without damaging the girl, and she wasn't prepared to go to that length just yet. She had what she wanted for now—a clear picture of what had befallen those from the company of the Jerle Shannara who had gone inland with the Druid. She could not be certain of the Druid's fate, however. Perhaps he was dead. Perhaps he was trapped beneath the ruins. Whatever the case, he did not present any danger to her. Without an airship to carry him off and with most of his company dead or imprisoned, he could do little harm.

She had time for the boy, then. Enough, that she did not need to consider the matter further.

No more than a handful of minutes passed before Cree Bega and his company of Mwellrets appeared out of the gloom, heavy bodies trudging warily through the forest dark, slitted eyes glittering as they caught sight of her. Repulsive creatures! she thought, but she kept her face expressionless. She rose to meet them and stood waiting on their approach.

"Misstress," their leader, her designated protector, hissed, bowing obsequiously. "Have you found the little peopless?"

"I have decided to leave that to you, Cree Bega. To you and your companions. There has been a battle in the ruins ahead, and those of the Druid's company who are not dead are scattered. Find them and make them your prisoners. That includes the Druid, should you come upon him and find him helpless enough to subdue."

"Misstress, I thinkss—"

"Be careful otherwise, because he is more than a match for all of you put together." She ignored his attempt to speak. "Leave him to me if you find he is able to defend himself. Do not go into the ruins; they are well protected. Do not expose yourself or your men to the danger they pose. Keep a close watch over both airships and do not land them under any circumstances."

He was watching her closely now, realizing that she had already removed herself from everything she was instructing him to do.

"Something has come up that I must investigate." She held his reptilian eyes with her steady, calm gaze. "I will be gone for a time, and while I am gone, you will be in charge. Do not fail me."

For a moment there was no response and she thought he had not understood. "Am I clear on this?"

"Where iss it my misstress goess?" he asked softly. "Our mission iss here—"

Cree Bega...imagined how sweet it would feel when he was permitted at last to put an end to the insufferable girl child,

"Our mission is where I say it is, Cree Bega."

Something in the Mwellret's cold gaze turned suddenly dangerous. "Your masster would not approve of thiss diversion . . ."

Two quick steps placed her right in front of him. "My master?" There was an uncomfortable silence as she waited on his reply. He stared at her in silence. "I have no master, ret," she whispered. "You have a master, not I, and he is not here in any case. I am the one you must answer to. I am your mistress. Is there anything else that I need to explain?"

The Mwellret said nothing, but she did not care for what she found in his eyes. She gave him a moment more, then repeated softly, "Is there?"

He shook his head. "Ass you wissh, misstress. Little peopless will be our prissonerss on your return, I promiss. But what of the treassure?"

"We'll have it soon enough." She looked away, off in the direction of Castledown. Was that so? Would it be so easy? She thought that her knowledge of the situation gave her an advantage over the Druid, but she could not afford to underestimate the enemy that warded Castledown. If it could defeat the Druid so easily, it was much stronger than she had expected. "Leave the matter of retrieving the treasure to me."

She dismissed him with barely a glance, then remembered Ryer Ord Star, still kneeling in a huddle to one side, still lost in some other place and time. "Do not harm the girl," she told Cree Bega, giving him a quick, hard look of warning. "She has been my eyes and ears aboard the Druid's airship on this voyage. There is much she knows that she has not yet told me. I want her kept safe for my return so that I may discover what she hides."

The Mwellret nodded, giving the seer a doubtful look. "Thiss one sseemss already dead."

"She sleeps. She is in a trance of some sort. I haven't had time to discover what is wrong with her." She brushed the ret aside. "Just do what I told you. I won't be long."

She departed the clearing without a glance back. Cree Bega and the others would do what she had ordered. They would be afraid to do anything else. But she was reminded again that it was growing more difficult to control them. She would be better off without them once she had the treasure in hand. Sometime soon, she would rid herself of them for good.

Eastward, the sky was beginning to brighten faintly with the dawn's approach. Night was already sliding westward, liquid ink withdrawing silently through the trees. A new day would bring fresh revelations. About the boy, perhaps. About why he thought as he did. About how his magic had found its way to him and why it was so like her own. A smile of expectation brightened her pale face. She looked forward to discovering the answers. She felt a rush of anticipation.

Hesitation and doubts were for others, she thought dismissively, for those who would never find their own way in the world and never make anything of their lives that mattered.

Picking up faint traces of the shape-shifter that still lingered on the fading night air, she began the hunt.

Gleaming eyes filled with malice, Cree Bega watched wordlessly until she was well out of sight. Hunched within his cloak and surrounded by those he commanded, he imagined how sweet it would feel when he was permitted at last to put an end to the insufferable girl child. That he hated her as he hated no one else went without saying; he had never felt anything but hate for her. He despised her as she despised him, and nothing shared through their service to the Morgawr would ever change that.

But the Morgawr, though claiming to be the girl's mentor and friend, was more Mwellret than human. His connection to Cree Bega's people was ancient and blooded. He had bonded to the girl because she was a novelty and he saw a use for her in the larger scheme of things. But his heart and soul were those of a Mwellret.

The girl, of course, believed them equals, outcasts bound together in their struggle for recognition and power over their oppressors. The Morgawr let her believe as much because it suited his purposes to do so. But they were not equals in any way that mattered, and the little Ilse Witch was far less skilled in her use of magic than she believed. She was a strutting, posturing annoyance, a foolish, ludicrously inept practitioner of an art that had been mastered by the Mwellrets and their kind centuries ago, before the Druids had even thought to take up the Elven magic as their sword and shield. Mwellrets would never be subjugated by humans, never become their inferiors, and this girl child was just another self-deceived morsel waiting to be plucked from their food chain.

He felt the eyes of his fellows upon him, awaiting his orders, their own thoughts as dark and vengeful as his. They, too, waited for their chance at the Ilse Witch. Cree Bega would give her the satisfaction of believing him subdued and obedient for now. He had pledged as much to the Morgawr. He would heed her commands and carry out her wishes because there was no reason for him to do otherwise.

But a shift in the wind was coming, and when it did, it would mark the end of her.

He wheeled on the others, finding them grouped tightly about him, dark visages expectant and eager within shadowed cowls. They awaited his orders, anxious for something to do. He would accommodate them. Members of the company of the Jerle Shannara were loose somewhere ahead within these trees, waiting to be harvested, to be killed or taken prisoner. It was time to accommodate them.

Growling softly, he told his men to start with Ryer Ord Star, then move on.

But when they turned to take charge of the seer, she was nowhere to be found.

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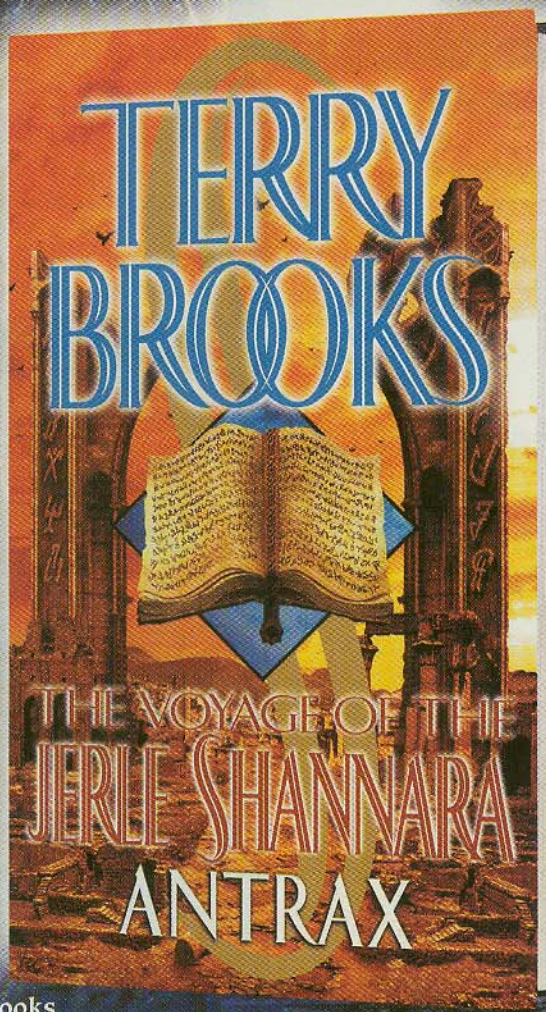

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Mind flayers

MIND BLAST

Wind wall and *wind walk* are spells spelled exactly the same except for their last letters. What two six-letter *Player's Handbook* spells are spelled the same except for their last letters?

You can find the solution to this *MIND BLAST* on page 73.

no. 26

by Mike Selinker

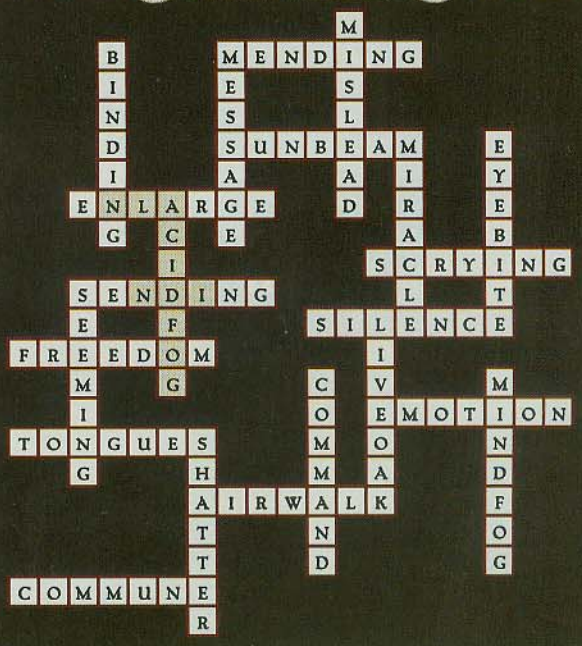
Time to try a little alliteration. The dutiful designers of the infinite incarnations of *Dungeon & Dragons* naturally named plenty of products for adventuring alliteratively. Each entry takes two or three words which, stunningly, start with like letters (as MEN & MAGIC). The particular parts of the thirty-five alliterations appear alone. The long list is arranged alphabetically, and the asterisked alliteration is unusually used two times. The leftover letters spell some more modules in the same series that themed themselves in such a style. Good gaming!

ALLITERATIONS

1. _____'_ _____
2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____
4. _____ at _____
5. _____ & _____
6. _____ into the _____
7. _____ of _____
8. _____ of _____
9. _____ _____
10. The _____ _____
11. _____'_ _____
12. _____ of _____
13. _____ _____
14. _____ _____
15. _____ of _____
16. _____ & _____
17. _____ _____
18. _____ on the _____
19. _____ of the _____
20. _____ & _____
21. _____'_ _____
22. _____ _____
23. _____ & _____
24. _____ of the _____
25. _____ & _____
26. _____* of the _____ _____
27. The _____ _____
28. The _____ _____
29. The _____ _____* of _____
30. _____ & _____
31. The _____ _____
32. _____ & _____
33. _____, _____, and _____
34. _____ _____
35. _____ of _____

D	Y	M	R	A	K	D	D	A	E	R	D	E	D	A	K	C	O	T	S
E	U	O	R	C	R	E	A	T	U	R	E	R	Z	F	O	R	G	E	G
R	A	N	G	N	I	D	N	A	T	S	T	B	O	A	G	E	G	M	I
E	O	S	G	T	S	R	E	W	O	P	E	E	D	W	M	A	N	P	W
T	T	T	I	E	S	O	T	O	W	E	R	A	K	A	S	T	A	L	T
T	F	E	S	D	O	G	I	M	E	D	C	C	D	N	E	I	F	E	R
A	S	R	E	T	S	N	I	M	L	E	E	O	D	S	E	V	L	E	E
H	D	T	E	M	T	O	M	B	L	D	S	N	L	R	C	E	O	S	M
S	L	A	V	E	R	S	T	A	T	U	E	G	L	O	R	Y	R	U	F
G	R	L	E	T	S	E	R	O	F	N	I	T	S	R	G	O	E	O	A
N	O	E	F	D	S	E	V	R	A	W	D	E	D	R	S	I	L	H	N
I	W	S	O	L	I	A	T	E	G	A	R	E	N	O	I	I	E	O	T
N	O	I	T	A	L	O	S	E	D	T	S	E	E	H	O	N	O	S	A
G	L	F	D	A	E	E	E	E	S	E	H	P	G	N	I	N	I	H	S
I	H	I	U	A	N	I	S	R	R	R	&	I	E	N	R	O	F	T	Y
A	T	N	C	O	C	C	D	T	S	T	S	I	L	A	I	C	E	P	S
P	A	N	T	H	E	O	N	S	S	N	O	R	T	L	A	B	R	E	O
M	E	S	I	N	I	S	T	E	R	E	S	H	I	E	L	D	R	D	U
A	D	A	T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E	G	N	A	D	L	O	G	A	T
C	A	T	A	L	O	G	U	E	M	S	S	A	L	T	M	A	R	S	H

no. 25 SOLUTION



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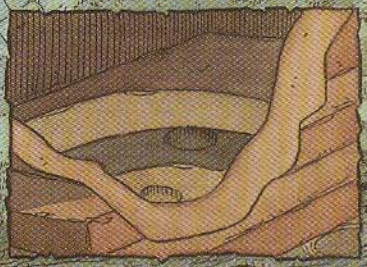
SHATTERSHREE'S REST

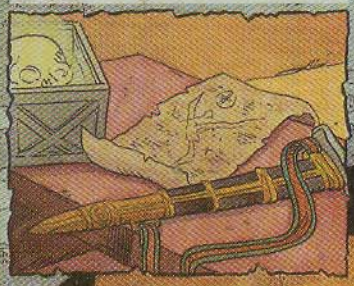
by Ed Greenwood · Illustrated by David Day

This is a false coffin 4 feet across and high, by 10 in length, atop a two-step bier; it is immobile, bottomless, and of solid granite. The lid relief is carved in the likeness of a serene female human knight in plate armor, but without a helm. She has long hair, a face that could belong to anyone—and which I believe echoes no real person—and her hands are clasped on a drawn sword and a wand, held ready to discharge.

In Common: "Within sleeps she of great magic/Disturb only what ye dare/ For wealth and power still are here."

The coffer holds a human skull (scavenged at random from a battle bonepit around Teshwave) enspelled with a *continual flame*. The scabbarded longsword is not magic, and the "treasure map" drawn by the dragon is often fantastical, but usually begins with a real, labeled location that Shattershree wants explored.





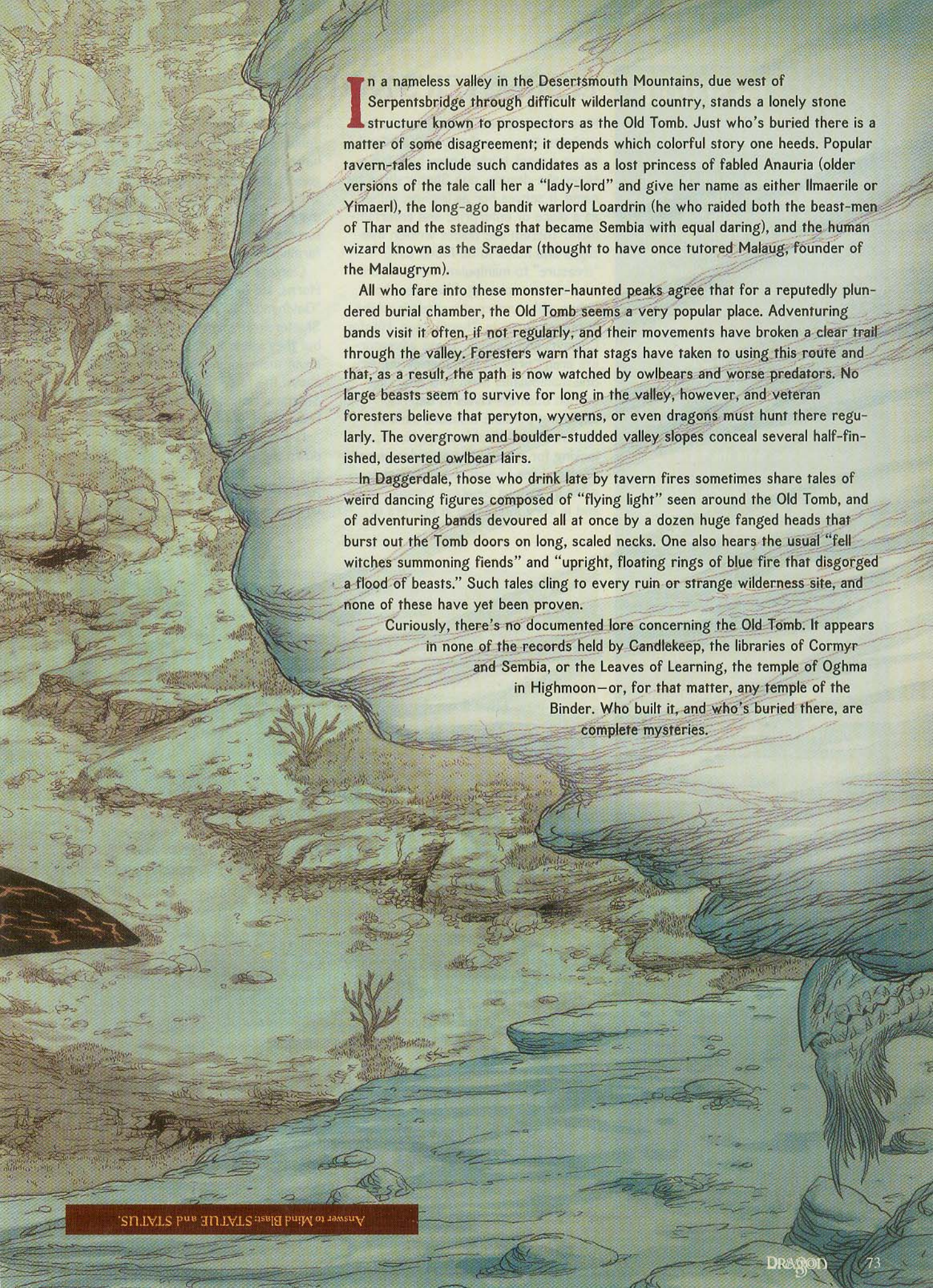
On the table there are four parchment sheets—whichever current written "lures" Shattershree wants seen—and a ring. Also in this room, there is a dagger in a stain (water tainted with owlbear-hide dye) and a warm wool cloak. The dagger, ring, and cloak bear only Shattershree's beacon tracer spells, to alert her to their locations whenever magic is cast on them.

This room holds a climb-shaft of carved handholds, a chair and table of stone, and an open coffer holding three scrolls: a *cure serious wounds* and two *invisibility* spells. Their inscriptions are interlinked with beacon tracer spells of Shattershree's devising. When a scroll is used, she is alerted to the user's location.

The furnishings shown are always here, just as depicted. Shattershree replaces those removed, damaged, or moved about by visitors.

The ring of keys on the sidetable were spell-duplicated by Shattershree from originals stolen from grand houses and guild vaults around Cormyr and Sembia. Next to the keys lie lumps of drawing chalk. The chalked circle on the floor is intended to look arcane and powerful, but it is pure fantasy. The collar manacle is very real; in human disguise, Shattershree will question any captive left alone here.

The water in the well is cool and drinkable. The wooden stand displays armor taken from old Anaurian and Netherese tombs; they are always old and impressive-looking, often magical—and always enspelled with beacon tracers for Shattershree's entertainment.



In a nameless valley in the Desertsmouth Mountains, due west of Serpentsbridge through difficult wilderland country, stands a lonely stone structure known to prospectors as the Old Tomb. Just who's buried there is a matter of some disagreement; it depends which colorful story one heeds. Popular tavern-tales include such candidates as a lost princess of fabled Anauria (older versions of the tale call her a "lady-lord" and give her name as either Ilmaerile or Yimaerl), the long-ago bandit warlord Loardrin (he who raided both the beast-men of Thar and the steadings that became Sembia with equal daring), and the human wizard known as the Sraedar (thought to have once tutored Malaug, founder of the Malaugrym).

All who fare into these monster-haunted peaks agree that for a reputedly plundered burial chamber, the Old Tomb seems a very popular place. Adventuring bands visit it often, if not regularly, and their movements have broken a clear trail through the valley. Foresters warn that stags have taken to using this route and that, as a result, the path is now watched by owlbears and worse predators. No large beasts seem to survive for long in the valley, however, and veteran foresters believe that peryton, wyverns, or even dragons must hunt there regularly. The overgrown and boulder-studded valley slopes conceal several half-finished, deserted owlbear lairs.

In Daggerdale, those who drink late by tavern fires sometimes share tales of weird dancing figures composed of "flying light" seen around the Old Tomb, and of adventuring bands devoured all at once by a dozen huge fanged heads that burst out the Tomb doors on long, scaled necks. One also hears the usual "fell witches summoning fiends" and "upright, floating rings of blue fire that disgorged a flood of beasts." Such tales cling to every ruin or strange wilderness site, and none of these have yet been proven.

Curiously, there's no documented lore concerning the Old Tomb. It appears in none of the records held by Candlekeep, the libraries of Cormyr and Sembia, or the Leaves of Learning, the temple of Oghma in Highmoon—or, for that matter, any temple of the Binder. Who built it, and who's buried there, are complete mysteries.

Answer to Mind Blast: STATUE and STATUS.

SHATTERSHREE

Shattershree is a whimsical, human-friendly dragon who loves to make wealth (but not necessarily keep it), influence events covertly, and manipulate folk. Nothing gives her greater pleasure than watching trade matters unfold as she's clandestinely caused them to do. She's neither malicious nor a lover of outright lies or law-breaking, but she seeks to punish or frustrate corruption in others and works against those who do ill while remaining technically within the law.

Shattershree has many friendships with humans, in a variety of guises. Sometimes she tests the loyalty of her human friends, or tries to learn more about their characters, by dealing with them in disguise. So far as she knows, thanks to her precautions, no human knows her true nature. In fact, Elminster, the Seven Sisters, and certain other Harpers know, but they try to avoid Shattershree since she is doing things they favor without their meddling, and contacting her might bring her to the attention of their foes. Shattershree has caches of treasure all over the western Dragonreach, from Tunland to Thar. She won't hesitate to spend her wealth to gain items or services she wants.

SHATTERSHREE

Female Mature Adult Silver Dragon (CR 17, 290 hp) with the following:

SKILLS

Alchemy 15
Appraise 25
Balance 15
Bluff 25
Diplomacy 25
Escape Artist 15
Gather Information 25
Heal 15
Intimidate 15
Knowledge (arcana) 25
Listen 30
Search 30
Scry 25
Spellcraft 30
Spot 30

FEATS

Alertness
Improved Initiative
Quicken Spell
Quicken Spell-Like Ability
Silent Spell
Snatch
Still Spell

ELMINSTER'S NOTES

Mysteries and bewilderments to some, perhaps. Know ye that yon "Old Tomb" is but a mock burial-house built for a silver she-dragon, one Shattershree by name. It serves her as lair—or, rather, as a place of enterprise and entertainment. Therein she places written messages and items to be found as "treasure" to manipulate adventurers who come exploring. She lures them hither with rumors she spreads whilst in human form, in Zhentil Keep, Hillsfar, Cormyr, and Sembia. These adventurers aren't prey to her, merely dupes. She manipulates them into attacking certain business rivals in Sembia, exploring possible treasure sites in Anauroch and the Moonsea North, and looking for trouble in particular places. Shattershree invests the riches she gains in various Sembian companies and is very interested in matters of trade and wealth in that realm. If ye dabble in trade in Ordulin, ye might well have met her in one of her many guises. She favors appearing as pretty little ash-blonde female scribes of crisp manner, but I've seen her as male foresters, wheelwrights, and even farmhands.

Clanless dwarves out of the Storm Horns, led by one Hamhaerth "Goldhand," built the false Tomb for Shattershree some eighty years ago, but they know that to say so might mean their doom. On a mountainside above the tomb is a ledge where Shattershree can lie in dragon form, to keep watch over her lure.

I've made something of a hobby, down the years, of looking over what she leaves there for adventurers to find. Here are some of her recent written missives, with my notations:

"When the usual sword-heads in Selgaunt start holding back grain, the price will soar. Last year the pirates waited until it was dearer than gold, then swooped in and snatched it all from the warehouses. This year it'll be upland warehouses in the Dales, or on their own country estates, guarded by the best sellswords coins can buy. They'll want to sell quick and quiet, not telling all the thieves in Sembia where the stuff's to be had, so they'll go to markets in Suzail and Tantras to whisper in the right ears. When big wagons start creaking up back roads, look within for the gold."

Such false goods shortages are practiced by all Sembian self-styled nobles and "deep-pocket" merchant cabals from time to time. Here the dragon is hoping adventurers will try to rob or otherwise harass Sembian trade-rivals if she points the way to them. Many Sembians will applaud anything that shatters such "dark trading" deeds.

"Rethgar, come with all haste. They hold the gold at the Teshford Arms all this month and want bones of dragons, wyverns, and undead—skulls get the best price, but even dust is accepted. Ask for Tethtan, but seek me first, as 'Hathla the Red.' Don't expect to recognize me."

Although wizards, Thayan traders in particular, do buy certain bones, this is designed to lure adventurers into attacking trade rivals of Shattershree, who take up seasonal residence in the Arms in Dagger Falls and pay prospectors handsomely for gems brought out of the mountains.

"Starag says the Gethlen band is to blame. Three chests of silver they buried under the westernmost Zhent guardpost in Yûlash. The gems they hid elsewhere, and only this little deceit keeps them alive, for Lord Raven's men dare not slaughter them until that hiding-place is found."

Know ye that "Lord Raven" is a notorious Sembian crime lord whose identity remains mysterious. I believe both Starag and the Gethlen band are fictitious.

"This blade belongs to Amalthus, heir of the family Roakhier, a decadent Sembian clan indeed. They've not seen Amalthus for a decade, since he began trading with drow out of Scornubel, and wouldn't recognize him if he greeted them in the street. Middling height, hair so dark brown as to be almost black, eyes much lighter brown, and he always wears cast brass full-face masks. So if you've a man in your band who can match this, he can be Amalthus forevermore. He must remember his father is Sandras, his mother Maetha, his two younger sisters Arnsalae and Shimra. His only friend among the servants was his man Tholt, now dead. The family arms is a black raven flying to the sinister with a big gold ring in its talons; the family estate is Stonepost House in the Flametree Hills, and the Roakhier manor in Saerloon is Sevenstars House on Blackpearls Lane. Only I know where Amalthus Roakhier's bones lie, and his father grows desperate for his return—not because he cares two coppers for his son, but because a visible heir makes his own neck that much safer in dealings with shady folk."

"This blade" lies in the Tomb now. So far as I can learn without prying overmuch into the sordid lives of Sembians who have more coins than is good for them, all of this is true. It would amuse Shattershree to control a Sembian noble house, but she has no interest in the danger and boredom of impersonating the heir herself when she can get someone else to do it, befriend or seduce him, and then steer his deeds. I'd not expect a long lifespan for Sandras Roakhier, once his false heir "returns" to the fold.

"These should get you past the doorguards. Your tongue will have to work a way past any War Wizards. Nathra awaits those clever enough to reach her in the Red Helm Room. She needs non-mages to be her 'silent agents' in the Dales and around Hullack, and she pays well."

"These" refers to a helm, dagger, and ring of particular design, currently lying in the Tomb. Nathra is a War Wizard loyal to Alusair. She is trying to forge a small, undercover force of adventurers to spy on rebellious Cormyrean nobles and their dealings with Sembia. The Red Helm Room is in the easternmost wing of the Royal Court, on the second floor of the South Front, overlooking the Promenade (with the Low Garden, so named because of its uniformly knee-height plantings) rather than Vangerdahast's Tower, which faces the East Front. Nathra has an office in that chamber of red tapestries—and yes, it has huge tilting helms, painted red, flanking its doors. Some courtiers have very strange ideas of decor.

A TYPICAL SHATTERSHREE CACHE

The silver dragon keeps at least one treasure cache hidden in the vale that holds the Old Tomb. Elminster suspects it's in a spot she can see while lying in dragon form on her lookout ledge.

He's found some of her other caches. All had similar contents:

A ring of various keys to coin vaults, and lock-coffers in those vaults, in Sembian merchant banks, and to warehouses Shattershree owns, mainly in Sembia.

A hoop-top carry-chest with stout metal handles at both ends, and metal collars—tubes for carrying-poles to be thrust through—on both sides. It contains three drawstring canvas sacks containing 50 gp each, 1 sack of 50 sp, and 6 empty sacks. Not locked or labeled.

A coffer (1 ft. x 2 ft. x 6 in.) locked with two padlocks and reinforced with an exterior iron "frame" binding, that contains a small cloth bag of 1d6 gems and two unlabeled potions, one of *invisibility* and one of *cure serious wounds*. A magic mouth on the coffer speaks when anyone but Shattershree touches it, saying in calm, cold female tones: "The curse is now upon you." (This is a bluff.)

The padlock keys are hidden nearby, not in the cache.

VENICE

BY KENNETH HITE · ILLUSTRATED BY TED BEARGEON

Once she did hold the gorgeous east in fee,
And was the safeguard of the West; the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

—William Wordsworth, *"On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic"*

Venice, the Queen of the Sea. What other city could make Marco Polo homesick, even in the stately pleasure-dome of Kublai Khan? Venice, they say, is "la Serenissima," the Serene Republic. They, in this case, being those archetypical sharp dealers, the Venetians. A city of turbulent conspiracy, bustling trade, and a yearly explosion of licensed mayhem, Venice's serenity might be open to question. Perhaps between hijacking crusades, beheading its rulers, and revolutionizing medieval economics, Venice felt peaceful—but surely your heroes can change all that.

HISTORY

The first Venetians were refugees fleeing Alaric's Gothic invasion of Italy, hiding out in the brackish swamps at the head of the Adriatic Sea. Raising a church to St. Mark in thanksgiving for their safety, they founded the city of Venice on April 25, 421 A.D. Venice's sea-girt refuge became its bulwark, and as Venetian traders moved out into the ocean, the sea built Venice's unique power and prosperity. In 1000 A.D., Doge ("duke") Pietro Orseolo formally married the Serene Republic to the Sea by throwing a magic ring into the ocean; Venice's doges have repeated their vows every Ascension Sunday since then. Both Pope and Emperor confirmed Venice's rights over the Adriatic in 1177 at a peace conference ending the Imperial wars in north Italy. Neutral Venice hosted the conference because it had cunningly avoided those wars, preferring to seek treasure and trade to the east in the slowly-crumbling Byzantine Empire and in the Saracen states of Egypt and Syria.

When the Byzantines tried to restrict Venetian trade, the eighty-year old, completely blind Venetian doge Enrico Dandolo blackmailed and hijacked the Fourth Crusade and personally led the charge onto the beach that took the impregnable capital of the East. Venice emerged, for a time, as ruler of "A Quarter and Half a Quarter of the Roman Empire," and the unquestioned mistress of the eastern Mediterranean. Venetian traders penetrated far into Asia and Russia, bringing back silks and spices to resell for gigantic profits. Unfortunately, the Byzantines recaptured their city in 1260, while the Venetian fleet was out of port and raised Venice's ancient rival, Genoa, to a place of privilege. After thirty years of piracy and counter-piracy, Venice and Genoa went to war. Badly mauled in the early going, Venetian admirals fought heroically and achieved a final draw in 1299. Venice came off much worse in its 1308-1313 war with the Pope over the city of Ferrarra; under Papal interdict, Venetians could not celebrate Carnevale, and their property and citizens could be attacked anywhere in Christendom without legal repercussions. More frighteningly, the war and interdict led the Tiepolo and Querini family into conspiracy against the state. Thanks to a providential storm, the loyalty of the sailors, and an old woman's well-aimed chamber pot (which killed Bajamonte Tiepolo's standard-bearer and threw his conspirators into confusion), the plot of 1310 failed—barely—to overthrow the Republic. Wracked by war, barely escaped from murderous treason, only just emerged from the spiritual terror of excommunication, and its trade in danger, Venice dearly hopes for a return to its fabled serenity.

VENETIAN GOVERNMENT

For a medieval city-state, Venice has an admirably stable government thanks to a long-standing ideology of civic unity and interlocking business arrangements among all the major families. Every family in the nobility (which includes the major merchants, but has been closed to new members since 1297) belongs to the Great Council; from the Council come the Quarantia ("the Forty"), the chief judges. Three of the Forty (the Capi) attend the meetings of the Doge's cabinet, the Council of Six—one for each sestiere. The Doge ("duke") is selected by a random group of councilors, none of whom can be of the same family. Upon election, the Doge must sign a promissione, explicitly limiting his power, and swear an oath to St. Mark; the Six and the Forty are empowered to prosecute the Doge for violating his oath.

Of course, it isn't all checks and balances; the Doge rules for life, while the Six serve non-repeating terms of one year each. The Doge's bodyguard are the sailors and workers of the Arsenale, and he commands a secret police force called the Signori di Notte ("Lords of the Night"). The Signori di Notte, however, share jurisdiction with the individual town watches of Venice's parishes; and a Council of Ten (similar to the Six) watches everyone for signs of treason and conspiracy.

Certainly [my house's] builder chose the finest position on the Grand Canal. And since that Canal is the patriarch of all others, and since Venice is a female pope among cities, I can truthfully say that I enjoy both the fairest highway and the most joyous view in the world.

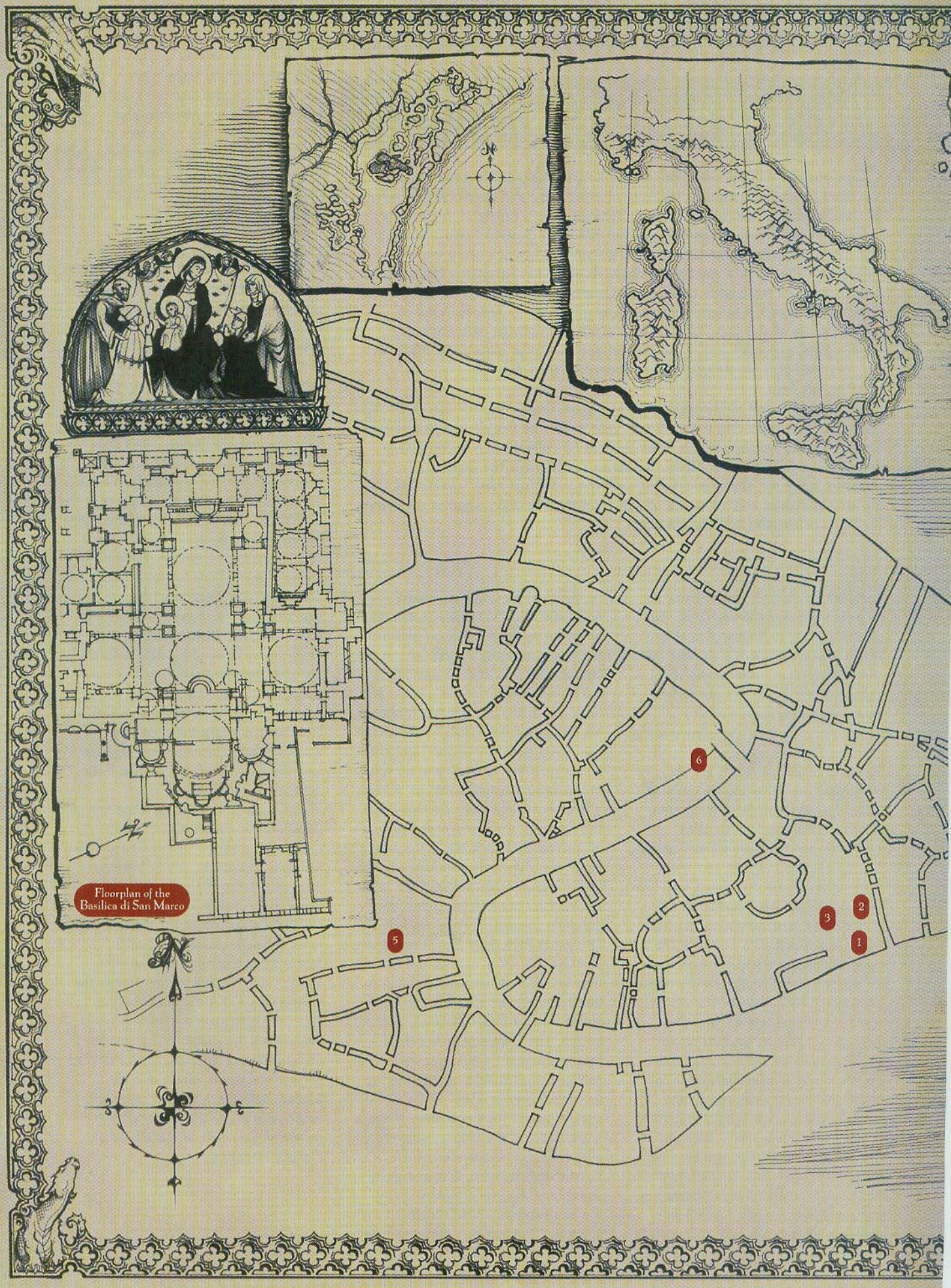
—Pietro Aretino

By 1320, nearly 200,000 people jam into less than three square miles of buildings, small gardens, and campi ("fields") built on wooden piles pounded into the marsh. Each campo, usually planted in grass and trees, holds at least one decorated well-head capping a rainwater cistern to store fresh water, and serves as the heart and marketplace of a contrade, or parish. Venice's thirty contradi make up six sestiere ("sixths" or districts), occupying the center of the main, somewhat fish-shaped, "island" of Venice—actually a hundred or so small islets linked with landfill and larchwood rafts, and intercut with canals. Venice's brick, wood, and stone buildings rise along the canals; bricoli (decorated posts) stick out of the water for mooring gondolas or barges. Venetian palazzi are open on the ground floor, often featuring private docks. Larger docks serve immense cargo cogs and galleys from as far away as England, Russia, or Egypt. Only Venetian pilots can bring these ships safely to harbor; the main Venetian "island" sits at the center of a 200-square mile lagoon, full of sandbars, riptides, shoals and other hazards. This geography keeps Venice safe from attack—only a superior navy could force the Lido (the bar across the lagoon), and no navy in the world outranks that of Venice.

This invincible navy springs from the Castello, the easternmost sestiere of Venice. Including the government Arsenale, shipyards and lumberyards cover this district; the workers (and the lumber) come from Schiavonia (modern Croatia) across the Adriatic. The great Riva degli Schiavoni dockyard on the south side of the island throngs with traders—who superstitiously avoid the spot where Doge Vitale Michiel II was stabbed to death in 1172. The Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo dominates the sestiere's north side; across the Rio de Mendicanti (a "Rio," or river, is another word for canal) are the busy workshops of the tailors, weavers, coopers, and blacksmiths of the Cannaregio sestiere. A major grain warehouse and food market along the Fondamenta della Erberia indicates Cannaregio's thriving trade with the mainland Italian plains. Lesser merchants (like the Polos) live here, and the Moorish and Jewish traders tend to gather in this district's Campo di Mori. Many charitable orders have established ospedali, or hospitals, here, especially the Oratorio dei Crociferi, for wounded or indigent crusaders.

South of Cannaregio, across the Grand Canal, the "C" shaped sestiere of Santa Croce arcs along the cloth factories on the western Canal, down along the western "jaws" of the Venetian fish, and curves back east with the Rio Nuova and Foscari canals. Although some of the greatest families of Venice, such as the Pesaros and Mocenigos, have their palazzi in northern Santa Croce, it remains a marshy area of food depots and informal dockyards. South of Santa Croce lies Dorsoduro, the "hard backbone" made up of many rocky, and hence stable, islands. On the western end of Dorsoduro, the church of San Nicolo del Mendicoli watches over Venice's hardworking fishermen; the eastern side of Dorsoduro, fronted by new palazzi around the church of San Vio, runs along the Grand Canal, along with boatyards and stonemasons' shops. Dorsoduro's petty bourgeois and working-class families face the case vecchie ("old families") of San Polo across the Rio Foscari.

San Polo is a round sestiere nestled between the mouth of the Santa Croce "C" and the Grand Canal. This sestiere, the oldest one in Venice, runs east from the immense Franciscan church of the Frari, past the bull-baiting pit at the Campo San Polo, through canals lined with fashionable homes and wineshops, to the fabled Rialto bridge across the Grand Canal, Venice's commercial heart. Its spiritual and political heart lies across the Rialto in the sestiere of San Marco, an oval district ranged around the great Piazza di San Marco, with the Molo docks on the south side of the Piazza (and of the sestiere), just east of the Grand Canal's terminus.


Floorplan of the
Basilica di San Marco
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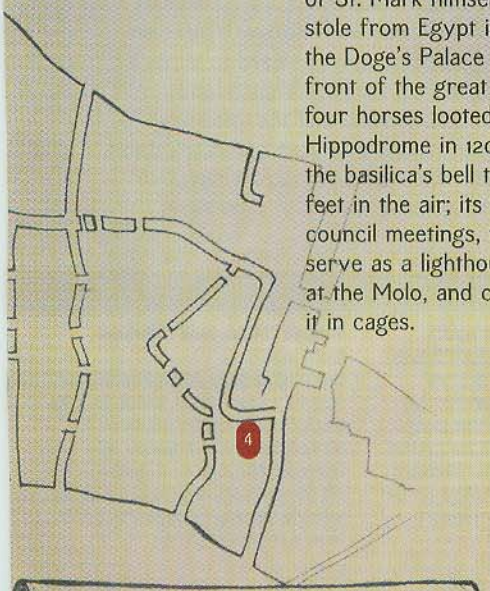
LOCATIONS

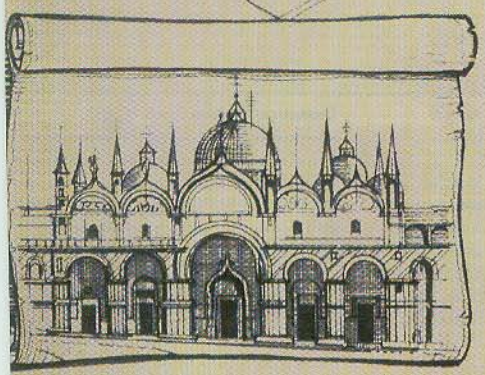
1 Doge's Palace

This imposing building on the east side of the Piazza di San Marco resembles an immense cubical fortress festooned with looted classical art. Two corner towers face the sea on the south side; the various councils hold court in chambers along the east side. Deeper within the building lie armories, dungeons, and torture chambers. The Doge's quarters are on the northeast, and his personal barge, the Bucintoro, docks there.

2 Basilica di San Marco

It speaks volumes about Venice's priorities that its most magnificent church, the glorious St. Mark's Basilica (built on the Byzantine plan in the 11th century), is technically the Doge's personal chapel. The cathedral of the Bishop of Venice is on an olive-shaped island east of Castello, not even in Venice proper. The importance of St. Mark's derives from the miraculously preserved body of St. Mark himself, which Venetian agents stole from Egypt in 828 A.D. St. Mark's abuts the Doge's Palace and completes the east front of the great Piazza; on its front parade four horses looted from the Constantinople Hippodrome in 1204. In the middle of the piazza, the basilica's bell tower, or campanile, rises 185 feet in the air; its bells ring for festivals or council meetings, fires under its gilded roof serve as a lighthouse for incoming ships to dock at the Molo, and convicted criminals hang from it in cages.





3 Piazetta

The bulk of the Piazza runs west from the Basilica, lined with shops and government office stalls. A smaller arm of the Piazza, the Piazetta, runs south to the Molo between the Doge's Palace and the new granaries. At the south end of the Piazetta rise two columns of Egyptian granite; the one on the west supports a statue of St. Theodore defeating a dragon, while the eastern pillar supports a massive winged lion in bronze, the emblem of Venice and St. Mark. Between the pillars is a legal "free zone," where games of chance are allowed; here, also, Venice executes her prisoners.

4 Arsenale

To keep up with new maritime technology, the Doges are expanding this great naval shipyard of Venice. In the Arsenale's three acres, drydocks, cranes, and other equipment stand by for repairs to storm-damaged galleys, while trained arsenalotti use mass production of interchangeable parts to turn out entire new warcraft in mere days. The great rope factory, the Tana, runs 350 yards along the south front of the Arsenale.

5 Ponte di Pugni

This stone "Bridge of Fists" in the northern Dorsoduro district crosses the San Barnaba canal and is a popular spot for duels. Rival gangs of toughs traditionally fight immense battles of "king of the hill" on this bridge, with fists or flails to settle turf issues elsewhere in the city. The Council turns a blind eye to such rumbles, considering them a way of blowing off civic steam.

6 Rialto

This new 50-yard long pontoon bridge of wood crosses the Grand Canal between San Polo and San Marco. Goldsmiths, moneychangers, bankers, jewelers, and other luxury sellers line the streets. Running north from the Rialto along the Grand Canal are Venice's three great marketplaces, the Erberia (fruit and vegetable market), the Pescheria (fish market), and the Beccarie (abattoir and meat market). On the east side of the bridge, the immense Fondaco di Tedeschi serves as a warehouse and merchandise mart for German traders in Venice.

CARNEVALE

Technically, the season of Carnevale ("farewell to meat"), or Carnival, lasts only for the ten days preceding Lent, ending on Fat Tuesday ("Mardi Gras" in French). However, in medieval Venice, Carnevale begins on St. Stephen's Day, December 26, and can last for up to three months. Torchlit revelry, fireworks, festivals, masked balls, guild processions, and still more lurid pleasures fill the nights; during February, Venice seems almost ungovernable. Other processions such as the coronation or funeral of a Doge, or the various saint's days (Saint Mark's Day is April 25), also feature carnival behavior.

Much as Carnevale itself spills into the rest of the year, Carnevale masks spill onto the streets, concealing the comings and goings of the rich and famous. Masked hooligans set upon commercial rivals or political enemies; disguised aristocrats slink into back-alleys for romantic rendezvous or covert conspiracy—perhaps some of those wearing masks might not even be human. The Venetian government, always paranoid about any extension of Italian turmoil to the Serene Republic, sporadically cracks down on mask-wearing in public. Laws restricting the use of masks outside Carnevale date as far back as 1268 and are reinforced repeatedly after the Conspiracy of 1310. This indicates that traveling masked through the streets remains common, albeit suspicious.

ADVENTURES IN VENICE

Yes, this was Venice, the fair frailty that fawned and that betrayed, half fairy tale, half snare; the city in whose stagnating air the art of painting once put forth so lusty a growth, and where musicians were moved to accords so weirdly lulling and lascivious. Our adventurer felt his senses wooed by this voluptuousness of sight and sound, tasted his secret knowledge that the city sickened and hid its sickness for love of gain, and bent an ever more unbridled leer on the gondola that glided on before him.

—Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*

Venice holds the riches of the east, and dishes them out with a liberal hand to those with a sharp sword or a sharper eye. Anyone can do anything under a Carnevale mask, or with the right connections. Enough silver grossi or gold ducats can buy plenty of both—and plenty of trouble. Here, then, is some more trouble to buy into:

- The acqua alta, the "high water" came in 1309 and flooded the city, costing Venice the war. The Council of Ten fear that the jealous sahuagin plan to drown the city—and want someone to pay them off or put them down. Perhaps the city's aquatic ghouls, the lacedoni, know where the sahuagin lurk—or perhaps they're part of the plan, hoping to turn Venice into an enormous watery grave.
- There was more loot from the Fourth Crusade than even Venice's industrious merchants and civil servants could ever hope to catalog. Especially since some of the statues keep moving from church to church, killing people who take too careful an inventory. The Dominicans wish to see the gargoyles gone—or petrified for the further glory of the Lord.
- According to rumor, Genoese spies have been sneaking around Murano—the island of glassmakers and mirror-grinders—trying to find out if the admirals are really trying to build Archimedes' famous ship-burning glass from plans discovered in the East. Whoever has the plans, or the glass or the spies, can write his own ticket with the Doge—or the Genoese—or anyone, really.

So dig in with both hands and see if you can emerge with a fistful of ducats!

FANTASY MEETS HISTORY

Some of you have written to say you love the "Cities of the Ages" articles but don't run an historical D&D campaign. Drop us a postcard to let us know what parts of Venice (and London, Prague, and the upcoming cities) you use in your campaign, and how. We'll print the most innovative and creative examples right here.

LOCAL HEROES

All characters presented as of 1320. Character levels are suggestions, and you should change them to suit your campaign.

Dante Alighieri (born 1265)
3rd-level Fighter/10th-level Bard
A brilliant poet and steadfast supporter of the Guelf faction, Dante has been exiled from his beloved Florence for almost 20 years. He is in Venice as an emissary from Ravenna, a rival for Adriatic trade. As secret head of the Fideli d'Amore troubadour society, Dante has contacts throughout southern Europe.

Francesco Dandolo (born 1270?)
5th-level Aristocrat/5th-level Expert
Diplomat and conniver, "il Cane" (the Dog) has a reputation for skill and underhandedness. Francesco's family, the Dandolos, are the leaders of the powerful oligarchic merchant faction, allied to the Ghibelline parties in the rest of Italy. They support landward expansion.

Rogerio "Malabranca" Morosini (born 1260?)
3rd-level Aristocrat/6th-level Fighter
Admiral and privateer known as "The Black Claw," Rogerio is famous for his heroism and skill against the Genoese. Although he is getting too old for raids and adventures now, he willingly sponsors schemes to profit Venice and harm Genoa.

Giovanni Soranzo, Doge of Venice (born 1240)
7th-level Aristocrat/6th-level Fighter/2nd-level Cleric
Elected doge in 1312, after service as Procurator of St. Mark's and as an admiral during the war with Genoa, Soranzo has family connections to the Conspiracy of 1310, but he governs Venice evenhandedly and well. His policy of peace makes him popular with the merchant families.

Marco Polo (born 1254)
5th-level Expert/3rd-level Rogue/3rd-level Fighter
From a minor merchant family, Marco "il Milione" Polo returned with a fortune in gems after spending twenty years at the court of the Great Khan. He fought in the war against Genoa, and while prisoner there wrote a very popular travel narrative full of magic and wonder.

Bajamonte Tiepolo (born 1275?)
4th-level Aristocrat/3rd-level Fighter/2nd-level Rogue
Once a popular cavalier despite rumors of corruption, Bajamonte was the main figure in the Conspiracy of 1310. Now in exile somewhere outside the city, he continuously plots a second coup attempt. His family, the Tiepolos, are powerful members of the old nobility.

Domenico Schiavo (born 1275?)
1st-level Aristocrat/8th-level Ranger
The bold and daring Schiavo famously minted Venetian ducats in the Genoese harbor during a lightning raid in the last war. He remains eager for one last score, and he isn't too particular about where it comes from. As a Dalmatian noble, he remains an outsider despite his heroism.

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FAITHS OF FAERÛN

NIGHTCLOAK

BY JULIA MARTIN & ERIC HADDOCK • ILLUSTRATED BY MATT WILSON

This month we revive another specialty priest from the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. In opposition to last month's priests of Selûne, we present the nightcloaks, the most favored priests of Shar. Shar and Selûne have been at war since before Faerûn was formed, and their clergy carry on that battle.

Nightcloaks

Nightcloaks are the apple of Shar's eye—devoted to her vision, preserving her secrets, practicing her magic, and as twisted and bitter as she is. They are beings of iron will and determination, although that determination is perverse. They weave webs of intrigue, mental domination, blackmail, and control through the use of illusion, necromancy, and enchantment. Yet they are not afraid to smash their toys if it suits Shar's purposes. They are cruel and intelligent, and they do not fear slipping away to return and grind their foes to dust at a later time. Honor is of no consequence to them. They do as they please, so long as it furthers their—and Shar's—power.

Clerics most often become nightcloaks. Rangers are rare. Nightcloaks often have levels of wizard, sorcerer, bard, or rogue in addition to the class that grants them divine spellcasting ability.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a nightcloak, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Patron Deity: Shar.
Alignment: Neutral evil.
Base Attack Bonus: +4.
Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells. Clerics must have access to the Darkness domain.
Bluff: 2 ranks.
Move Silently: 2 ranks.
Perform: 4 ranks.
Feats: Iron Will, Shadow Weave Magic, Spell Focus (Enchantment, Illusion, or Necromancy), and Pernicious Magic or Tenacious Magic.

THE NIGHTCLOAK

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Darkness spells	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Eyes of Shar	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Insidious Magic	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Shadow talk	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Disk of night	+1 level of existing class
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	*True lies*	+1 level of existing class
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Mind of Shar	+1 level of existing class
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Shar's caress	+1 level of existing class
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	*Minion of Shar*	+1 level of existing class
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	*Voice of ineffable evil*	+1 level of existing class

HIT DIE d8

Class Features

All of the following are features of the nightcloak prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Nightcloaks are proficient with all simple weapons, all types of armor, and with shields.

Darkness Spells: A nightcloak can pray for and receive any Darkness domain spell as if it were on her divine spell list. The spell uses a spell slot of a level equal to its level in the Darkness domain list. For instance, a cleric/nightcloak could pray for *darkbolt* as a 5th-level cleric spell, and a ranger/nightcloak could pray for *blacklight* as a 3rd-level ranger spell.

Eyes of Shar: Nightcloaks have eyes that are totally black. They have 60-foot darkvision. They can also see through magical darkness to a range of 10 feet (in the same black-and-white sight that darkvision provides). They cannot be blinded by magical effects. This is an extraordinary ability.

Insidious Magic: Nightcloaks get the Insidious Magic feat as a bonus feat at 2nd level, reflecting their ability to use the Shadow Weave under Shar's close guidance.

Shadow Talk: Nightcloaks are able to communicate mystically through the shadows of the mind. Nightcloaks can whisper short messages to other worshipers of Shar within 500 feet. All Shar worshipers within range hear the message as a whisper in their mind. Observers can hear the words if they are close enough to physically hear the nightcloak's actual whispers (a DC 15 Listen check if the listener is within 10 feet of the nightcloak, +1 DC per 5 feet beyond that). This a free action. This supernatural ability is a language-dependent, and it can be used to communicate with undead worshipers of Shar and undead creatures in the service of worshipers of Shar.

Disk of Night: When a nightcloak wields a chakram, she negates damage reduction in creatures she attacks as if it were a +2 weapon. If the chakram's bonus is greater than the effect of this class ability, use the chakram's bonus to determine if damage reduction is negated. This is a supernatural ability.

True Lies: A nightcloak can reach into a creature's mind and modify a subject's memories as the 4th-level bard spell *modify memory*. A nightcloak can use this spell-like ability a number of times per tenday equal to her Charisma modifier (minimum of one). The *modify memory* works as if cast by a bard of the nightcloak's character level. This ability is a standard action (as described in the *modify memory* spell).

Mind of Shar: Shar grants nightcloaks the extraordinary ability to use their minds to warp their bodies. They can choose to use their Intelligence modifier or their Constitution modifier, whichever is greater, as a bonus to Fortitude saving throws. This is an extraordinary ability.

Shar's Caress: Nightcloaks that have Weapon Focus in chakram, whip, or dagger become able to surround that weapon with Shadow Weave magic that burns Shar's opponents with a black flame on a successful attack. The nightcloak is able to use this ability to deal an additional 2d6 points of divine damage a number of times per day equal to the nightcloak's Charisma modifier. A nightcloak must decide to use this supernatural ability before the attack is made; if the attack misses, that use of Shar's caress is wasted. This damage is divine damage not fire damage, and spell resistance does not apply.

Minion of Shar: Once per day as a standard action, a nightcloak can summon one shadow per nightcloak class level to do her bidding for a number of rounds equal to her class level. Any shadows this summoned shadow creates by draining Strength are under the control of the nightcloak, but vanish along with the original when the duration expires. The nightcloak is able to verbally communicate with the shadows as if she knew their language. She can also use her shadow talk ability to communicate with them. This is a spell-like ability.

Voice of Ineffable Evil: Once a day, nightcloaks can command a creature as per the *dominate monster* spell as though cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to the nightcloak's character level. The effect lasts one day. Unlike most spell-like abilities, *voice of ineffable evil* has a verbal component. D

CLASS SKILLS

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

The nightcloak's class skills (organized by key ability) are:

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
		Concentration	Craft	Heal	Bluff
			Knowledge (arcana)	Intuit Direction	Diplomacy
			Knowledge (history)	Profession	
			Knowledge (the planes)	Sense Motive	
			Knowledge (religion)		
			Scry*		
			Spellcraft		

*Exclusive skill

BY BRUCE CORDELL

VS. VAMPIRES

"My advice? Run. Run fast, and run far."
—Gaerioth, Monk

Vampires come in two varieties—difficult and impossibly difficult. Vampires are rightly named the princes of the undead. They possess the strengths and resistances granted by undeath, regenerative abilities, the ability to flee gaseously if things don't go their way, the ability to charm their foes into accepting a Constitution-draining blood suck, and their touch inflicts a negative energy level. Then, when the vampire spawn are vanquished, the real vampire appears, laden with ten or more levels of a spellcasting class.

Now the true fight begins.

Preparation

If you know a vampire is in your future, take a few added precautions.

Negative Energy Protection: Prepare or buy a scroll of the 3rd-level spell *negative energy protection.* When the vampire encounter is imminent, the cleric should use the scroll or her prepared spell on the party member most likely to fight the vampire in melee. This spell won't last long, so casting it on other characters wastes valuable time.

Magic Circle Against Evil: Prepare or buy a scroll of the 3rd-level spell *magic circle against evil.* The circle trumps *protection from evil* in that it provides an area of protection, granting you and your allies a +2 deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus to all saves against attacks made by evil creatures, such as vampires. Even better, it blocks mental domination and prevents a previously dominated person from responding to new orders, although the victim will still follow previous orders.

Gaseous Form: It's wonderful when you make the vampires run, causing them to flee in the form of mist . . . until they return later, completely healed and in greater numbers. This is especially troublesome if it occurs repeatedly and your party is unable to penetrate the tiny cracks through which the vampires flee.

Before your next foray into vampire-infested halls, purchase enough *potions of gaseous form* for your whole party. Then, when the cleric's turning causes the vampire to retreat where you cannot follow, suck down your potions and follow anyway. This way, you can trail the troublesome bloodsuckers right to their lair and deal with them permanently.

Mundane Supplies: As with any undead, holy water deals 2d4 points of damage and ignores natural and standard armor bonuses. Garlic is also useful against vampires, as are wooden stakes. If you're caught without a wooden stake, snap the head off an arrow, and you're back in business.

Tactics

If you decide to fight instead of run, specific tactics help you prevail in your vampiric contest.

Don't Split Up: If you suspect vampires are abroad, don't split the party. Don't send the rogue ahead to scout, because more than likely, he'll come back charmed, ready to betray you when the vampire makes its inevitable appearance.

Turn Undead: The first thing the cleric should do when a vampire has entered melee is attempt to turn the dark creature. Vampires are harder to turn than their Hit Dice would otherwise indicate because of their turn resistance, but a 5th-level cleric stands a good chance to turn vampire spawn, so if the first fails, a second attempt isn't a bad idea. If you're up against a vampire with lots of Hit Dice, the cleric shouldn't waste her time on too many turn attempts—there are many other things she could be doing instead. A *divine favor* spell cast on a fighter or paladin is quite useful, as is *bless.* Casting *prayer* is good; its luck bonus stacks with the other bonus types you are likely to employ (but not with *divine favor*).

Haste: This spell is always useful. Like *negative energy protection, haste's* duration is measured in rounds, so the wizard or sorcerer should use it only when conflict is imminent. The same goes for fighter-types who have *potions of haste* ready to go.

Overwhelm: Vampires have fast healing and slowly regain hit points each round. The best way to combat a foe with fast healing or regeneration is to focus all of the party's firepower on one foe at a time so that the overwhelming damage dealt far outweighs the fast healing. Once one vampiric foe is forced to flee, the party can collectively set their sights on the next target.

Stay Safe: Use the prepared spell or a scroll of *magic circle against evil* to your best tactical advantage. The area of protection extends 10 feet from the target touched, and it will move with the target.

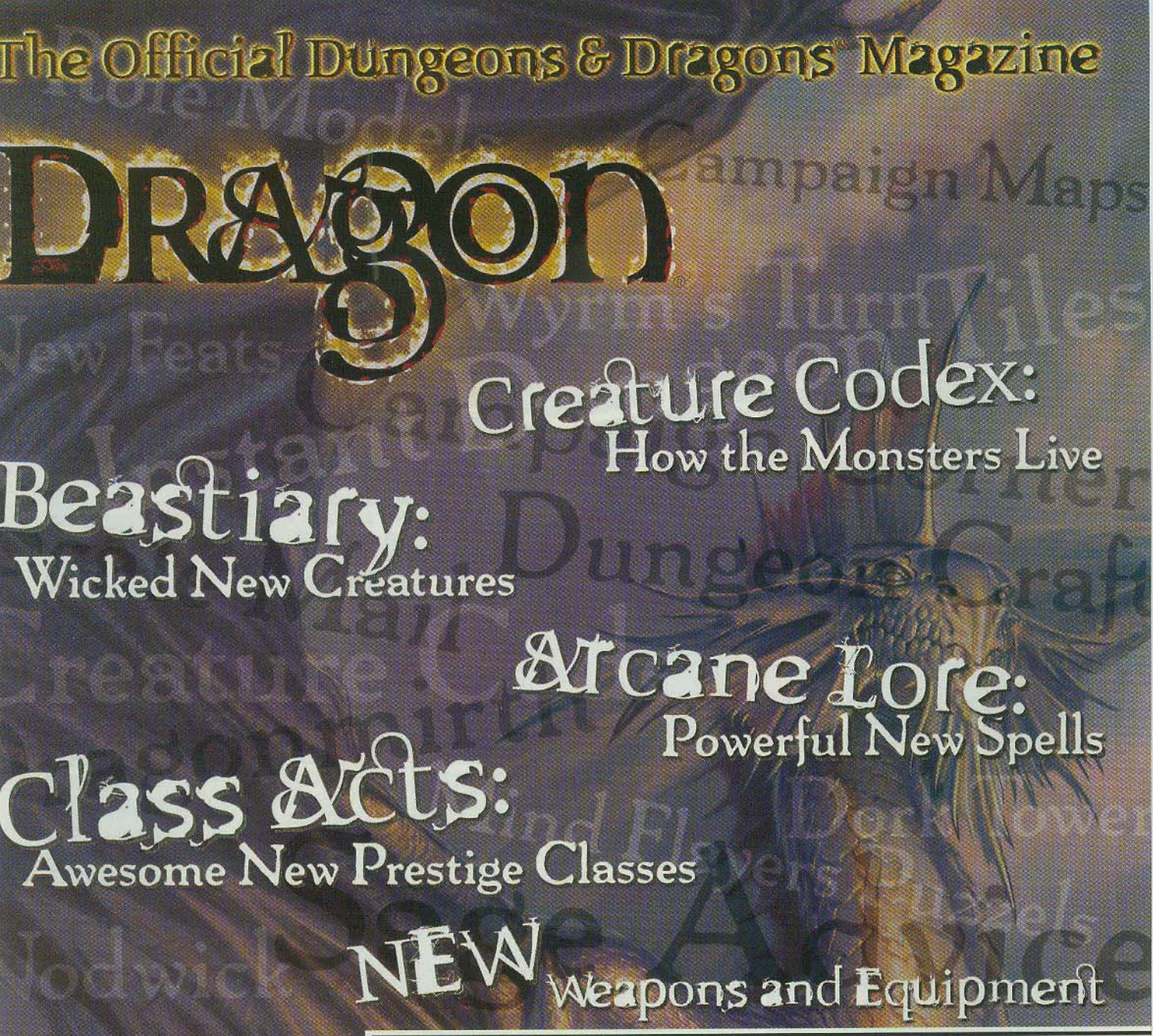
Target the spellcaster with the spell. This way, the spellcaster's companions can stay protected from evil influences and mental domination while they remain within the 10-foot radius of protection, while at the same time clustering close to the spellcaster, helping to keep her safe. If movement is necessary for those in melee, they should delay their actions until immediately after the spellcaster's initiative, thus synchronizing their movement and actions.

Another method of using the *magic circle against evil* is to cast it on one of the main hand-to-hand combatants, such as the fighter or paladin. This grants the fighter maneuverability and allows flanking party members to enjoy the protection of the spell. Being undead, the vampire isn't susceptible to sneak attacks, but the +2 bonus to the attack rolls made against flanked foes still applies. D

PURGING NEGATIVE LEVELS

Vampires mean negative levels. Twenty-four hours later, a Fortitude save stands between you and level loss. The following cocktail of spells swings the odds in your favor if cast in a timely manner. All the bonus types stack.

SPELL	FORTITUDE BONUS
Magic circle against evil	+2 resistance
Guidance	+1 competence
Endurance	+2 (on average)
Prayer	+1 luck
	TOTAL BONUS: +6



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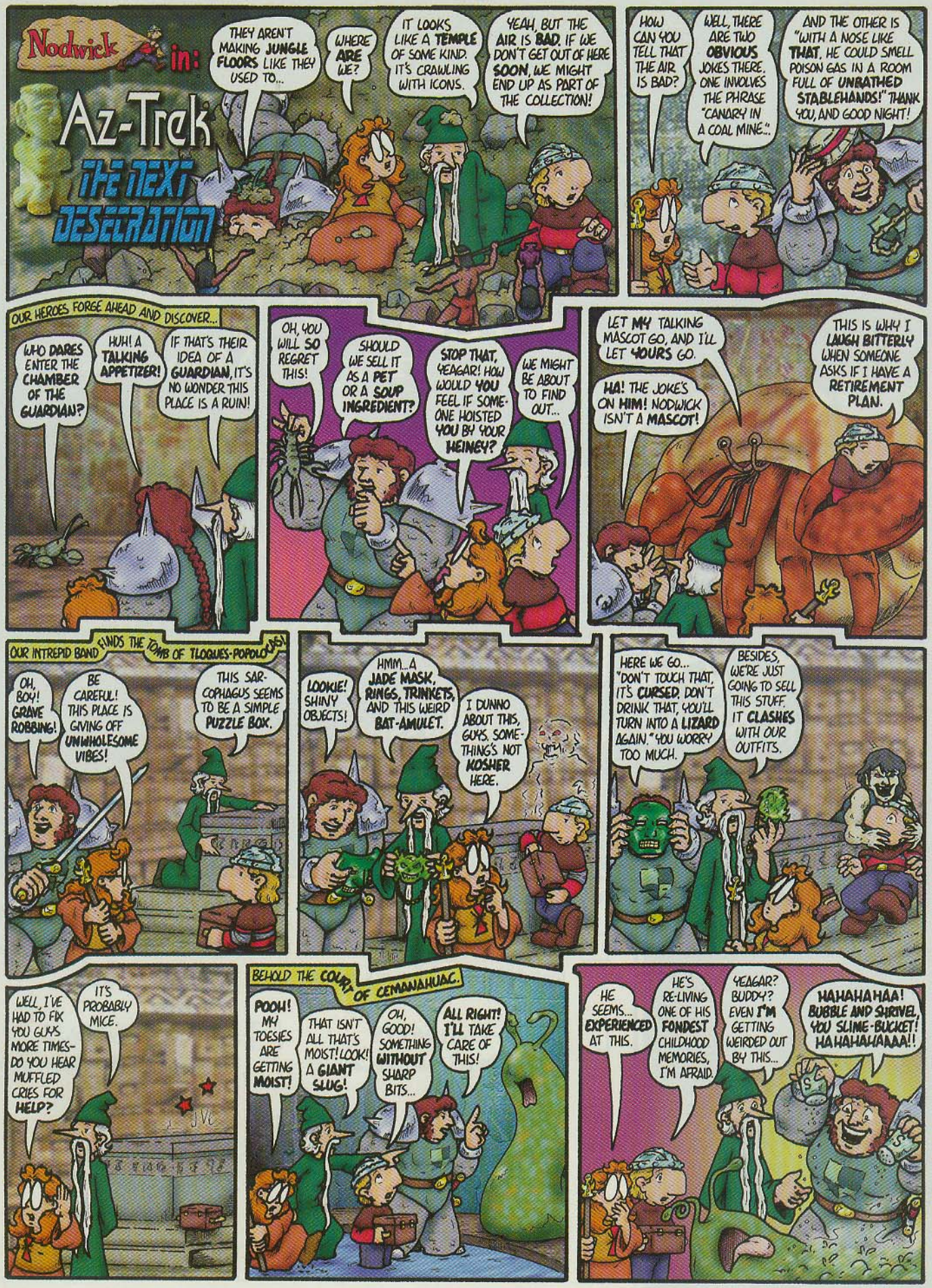
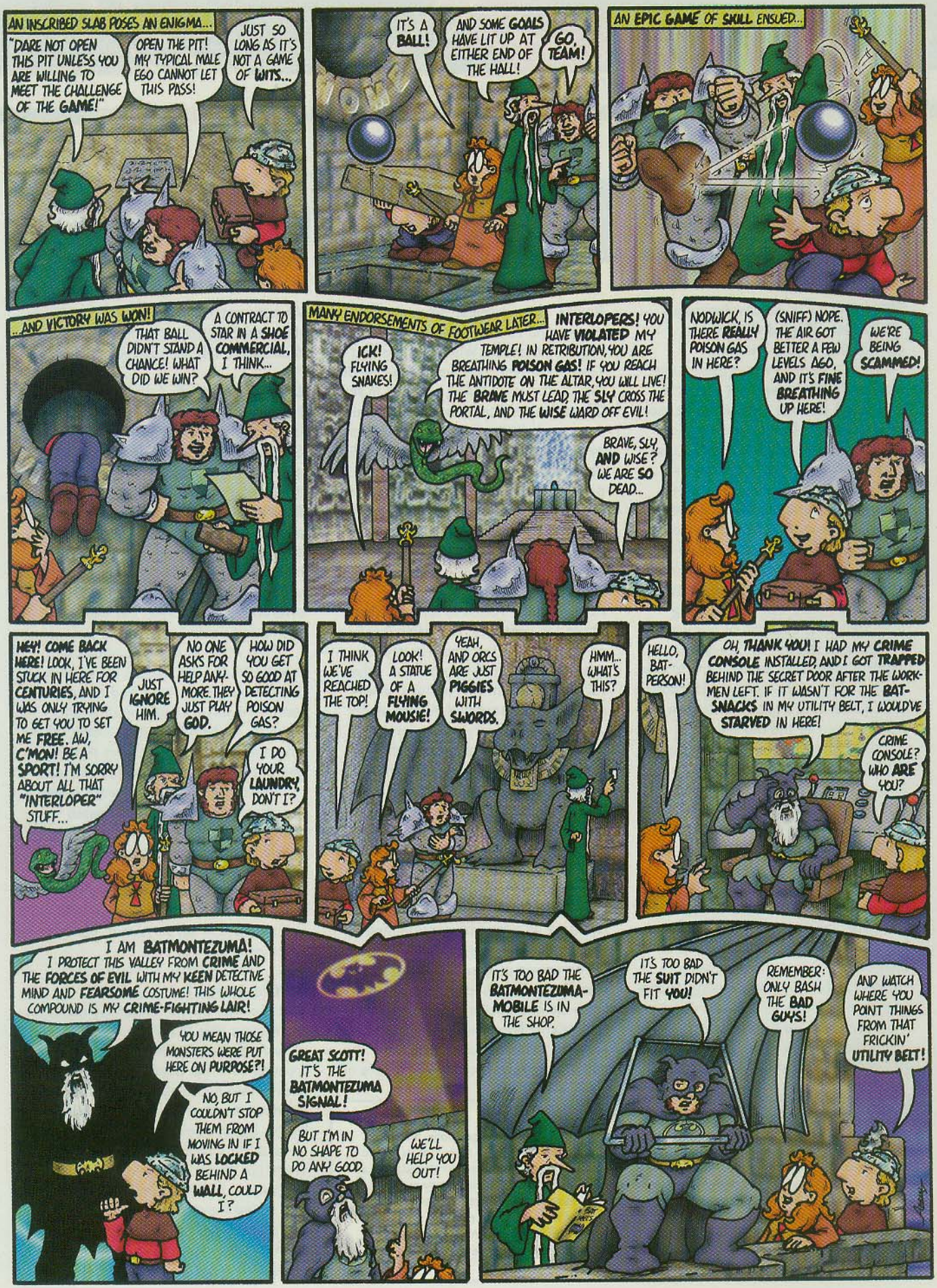

Nodwick in:
Az-Trek
The Next Desecration
THEY AREN'T MAKING JUNGLE FLOORS LIKE THEY USED TO...
WHERE ARE WE?
IT LOOKS LIKE A TEMPLE OF SOME KIND. IT'S CRAWLING WITH ICONS.
YEAH, BUT THE AIR IS BAD. IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE SOON, WE MIGHT END UP AS PART OF THE COLLECTION!
HOW CAN YOU TELL THAT THE AIR IS BAD?
WELL, THERE ARE TWO OBVIOUS JOKES THERE. ONE INVOLVES THE PHRASE "CANARY IN A COAL MINE"...
AND THE OTHER IS "WITH A NOSE LIKE THAT, HE COULD SMELL POISON GAS IN A ROOM FULL OF UNBATHED STABLEHANDS!" THANK YOU, AND GOOD NIGHT!
OUR HEROES FORGE AHEAD AND DISCOVER...
WHO DARES ENTER THE CHAMBER OF THE GUARDIAN?
HUH! A TALKING APPETIZER!
IF THAT'S THEIR IDEA OF A GUARDIAN, IT'S NO WONDER THIS PLACE IS A RUIN!
OH, YOU WILL SO REGRET THIS!
SHOULD WE SELL IT AS A PET OR A SOUP INGREDIENT?
STOP THAT, YEAGAR! HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF SOMEONE HOISTED YOU BY YOUR HEINEY?
WE MIGHT BE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...
LET MY TALKING MASCOT GO, AND I'LL LET YOURS GO.
HA! THE JOKE'S ON HIM! NODWICK ISN'T A MASCOT!
THIS IS WHY I LAUGH BITTERLY WHEN SOMEONE ASKS IF I HAVE A RETIREMENT PLAN.
OUR INTREPID BAND FINDS THE TOMB OF TLOQUES-POPOLOQUES!
OH, BOY! GRAVE ROBBING!
BE CAREFUL! THIS PLACE IS GIVING OFF UNWHOLESOME VIBES!
THIS SARCOPHAGUS SEEMS TO BE A SIMPLE PUZZLE BOX.
LOOKIE! SHINY OBJECTS!
HMM... A JADE MASK, RINGS, TRINKETS, AND THIS WEIRD BAT-AMULET.
I DUNNO ABOUT THIS, GUYS. SOMETHING'S NOT KOSHER HERE.
HERE WE GO... "DON'T TOUCH THAT, IT'S CURSED. DON'T DRINK THAT, YOU'LL TURN INTO A LIZARD AGAIN." YOU WORRY TOO MUCH.
BESIDES, WE'RE JUST GOING TO SELL THIS STUFF. IT CLASHES WITH OUR OUTFITS.
WELL, I'VE HAD TO FIX YOU GUYS MORE TIMES- DO YOU HEAR MUFFLED CRIES FOR HELP?
IT'S PROBABLY MICE.
BEHOLD THE COURT OF CEMANAHUAC.
POOH! MY TOESIES ARE GETTING MOIST!
THAT ISN'T ALL THAT'S MOIST! LOOK! A GIANT SLUG!
OH, GOOD! SOMETHING WITHOUT SHARP BITS...
ALL RIGHT! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS!
HE SEEMS... EXPERIENCED AT THIS.
HE'S RE-LIVING ONE OF HIS FONDEST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, I'M AFRAID.
YEAGAR? BUDDY? EVEN I'M GETTING WEIRDED OUT BY THIS...
HAHAHAHAA! BUBBLE AND SWIVEL YOU SLIME-BUCKET! HAHAHAHAAA!!


AN INSCRIBED SLAB POSES AN ENIGMA...
"DARE NOT OPEN THIS PIT UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE GAME!"
OPEN THE PIT! MY TYPICAL MALE EGO CANNOT LET THIS PASS!
JUST SO LONG AS IT'S NOT A GAME OF WITS...
IT'S A BALL!
AND SOME GOALS HAVE LIT UP AT EITHER END OF THE HALL!
GO, TEAM!
AN EPIC GAME OF SKULL ENSUED...
...AND VICTORY WAS WON!
THAT BALL DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE! WHAT DID WE WIN?
A CONTRACT TO STAR IN A SHOE COMMERCIAL, I THINK...
MANY ENDORSEMENTS OF FOOTWEAR LATER...
ICK! FLYING SNAKES!
INTERLOPERS! YOU HAVE VIOLATED MY TEMPLE! IN RETRIBUTION, YOU ARE BREATHING POISON GAS! IF YOU REACH THE ANTIDOTE ON THE ALTAR, YOU WILL LIVE! THE BRAVE MUST LEAD, THE SLY CROSS THE PORTAL, AND THE WISE WARD OFF EVIL!
BRAVE, SLY, AND WISE? WE ARE SO DEAD...
NODWICK, IS THERE REALLY POISON GAS IN HERE?
(SNIFF) NOPE. THE AIR GOT BETTER A FEW LEVELS AGO, AND IT'S FINE BREATHING UP HERE!
WE'RE BEING SCAMMED!
HEY! COME BACK HERE! LOOK, I'VE BEEN STUCK IN HERE FOR CENTURIES, AND I WAS ONLY TRYING TO GET YOU TO SET ME FREE. AW, C'MON! BE A SPORT! I'M SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT "INTERLOPER" STUFF...
JUST IGNORE HIM.
NO ONE ASKS FOR HELP ANYMORE. THEY JUST PLAY GOD.
HOW DID YOU GET SO GOOD AT DETECTING POISON GAS?
I DO YOUR LAUNDRY, DON'T I?
I THINK WE'VE REACHED THE TOP!
LOOK! A STATUE OF A FLYING MOUSIE!
YEAH, AND ORCS ARE JUST PIGGIES WITH SWORDS.
HMM... WHAT'S THIS?
HELLO, BAT-PERSON!
OH, THANK YOU! I HAD MY CRIME CONSOLE INSTALLED, AND I GOT TRAPPED BEHIND THE SECRET DOOR AFTER THE WORKMEN LEFT. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE BAT-SNACKS IN MY UTILITY BELT, I WOULD'VE STARVED IN HERE!
CRIME CONSOLE? WHO ARE YOU?
I AM BATMONTEZUMA! I PROTECT THIS VALLEY FROM CRIME AND THE FORCES OF EVIL WITH MY KEEN DETECTIVE MIND AND FEARSOME COSTUME! THIS WHOLE COMPOUND IS MY CRIME-FIGHTING LAIR!
YOU MEAN THOSE MONSTERS WERE PUT HERE ON PURPOSE?!
NO, BUT I COULDN'T STOP THEM FROM MOVING IN IF I WAS LOCKED BEHIND A WALL, COULD I?
GREAT SCOTT! IT'S THE BATMONTEZUMA SIGNAL!
BUT I'M IN NO SHAPE TO DO ANY GOOD.
WE'LL HELP YOU OUT!
IT'S TOO BAD THE BATMONTEZUMA-MOBILE IS IN THE SHOP.
IT'S TOO BAD THE SUIT DIDN'T FIT YOU!
REMEMBER: ONLY BASH THE BAD GUYS!
AND WATCH WHERE YOU POINT THINGS FROM THAT FRICKIN' UTILITY BELT!

by Chris Pramas

AHMUT'S LEGION

The Empire of Ravilla dominated Western Oerik for some two hundred years. The Elven Peace of 552-698 was a golden age for Ravilla. Elven learning and arts flourished, and the army did little more than police the border and fend off the occasional savage humanoid raid. In their strength, the elves became complacent. They were the masters of Western Oerik, and none could challenge them . . . or so they thought.

In 699, Ravilla was shocked to its core. A horde of horsemen appeared on its southeast border, and Stratis, the God of War, was spied among their ranks. As columns of horsemen poured into Ravilla, the elves first heard a name they would learn to fear: Ahmut. He was the undisputed leader of the invaders, a group of human tribes known as the Baklien.

The elven army was at first unconcerned. They had, after all, never been defeated in their home territory. When the two armies clashed for the first time, the elven commanders watched smugly as the Baklien broke and ran. Gray elf cavalry pursued to finish the job and quickly left the infantry behind. With astounding discipline, the Baklien reformed and surrounded the isolated elven horsemen. Ahmut then led his heaviest troops forward in a devastating charge. The elven infantry could only watch as their brethren were annihilated.

For the next three years, Ahmut and the Baklien rampaged across Ravilla. They defeated several elven armies and rebuffed all attempts at a negotiated peace. Where armies had failed, however, one woman succeeded. Prisca, the most skilled assassin in the Oligarch's service, penetrated Ahmut's camp and slit the warlord's throat as he slept. When Ahmut's death was discovered, his lieutenants scrambled for power. In the ensuing chaos, the armies of Ravilla rallied and drove the Baklien out of the empire. They disappeared to the south and never returned.

The Terror Reborn

Ahmut's body rotted in an unmarked grave for centuries. His name lived on, as he gradually became a bogeyman used to frighten elven children. When rain pounded on the rooftops, it was said to be the sound of Ahmut on his ghostly steed. Everyone understood that Ahmut would take vengeance on the elven people if given the chance.

As he died with an elven blade in his heart, Stratis gave Ahmut that chance. The god's spear fell straight and true, piercing the aged skeleton of the Baklien warlord. Ahmut, fire in his eyes anew, tore himself free from the grave. The godly artifact had brought him back as a lord of undeath, and he would have his vengeance.

The power of Stratis's spear allowed Ahmut to raise undead skeletons quickly from old battlefields. As he began his war against life, Ahmut was able to add zombies to his ranks as well. Soon the countryside was abuzz with rumors of Ahmut's return. The elven Oligarchs dismissed the talk as purest fancy, but theirs were not the only ears listening.

Unholy Alliance

Nerull the Reaper, the God of Death, is not without his followers in the Sundered Empire. The Red Scythe is a cult that dates back several centuries. It began in the outlying provinces of Ravilla, far from centers of elven power. Although quickly proscribed by the authorities, the cult grew. To humans, halflings, and gnomes living under elven rule, the Red Scythe offered not just power, but the power of life and death.

When word of Ahmut's return reached them, the leaders of the Red Scythe knew their hour had come at last. Here was a champion of death, ready to do Nerull's will on Oerth. All that remained was to contact Ahmut and put him under the cult's command.

The Red Scythe leaders were in for a surprise. They found that Ahmut retained all of his cunning and force of will. One touch from the lord of undeath slew the most powerful priest of Nerull, and the rest of the Red Scythe quickly fell into line. The cult would now serve Ahmut, not command him.

On the March

With the Red Scythe under his thrall, Ahmut was able to build a true legion of undead. Red Scythe necromancers from all over the Sundered Empire poured into his camp, ready to animate the dead for their new master. Ahmut led his legion into the mountains first, to establish a base of operations. There his forces slew several thousand troglodytes in fierce underground battles, taking the warrens for themselves. The troglodytes returned to life in a matter of hours, as zombies in Ahmut's service. This set a pattern for Ahmut's

CULTISTS OF THE RED SCYTHE

Until Ahmut arrived and conquered enough territory to give them a base of operations, the Cult of the Red Scythe was forced to operate in the shadows. In Ravilla and Thalos, those cultists caught were executed out of hand. The Red Scythe thus discouraged its members from carrying scythes as weapons or tattooing the cult emblem on their persons: The risk of detection was simply too great. Instead, the cult encouraged the use of a dagger, a weapon so common that even peasants often carried it. Daggers aroused no suspicion and were perfect for the business of murder.

The Red Scythe is home to clerics of Nerull, necromancers, assassins, and rogues of ill repute. The dagger is the favored weapon of all, and many clerics and wizards will take a level of rogue to pick up the sneak attack ability and learn the art of stealth.

further conquests. Each enemy slain was not only a blow to the opposing army, but a fresh recruit for the forces of undeath.

Ahmut's Legion has continued to grow, from day to day and battle to battle. The Baklien warlord now controls a swath of territory southeast of the elven city-states. Advance parties have clashed in the mountains with the gnolls of Naresh, and more serious battles have occurred with Drazen's Horde to the west. While Ahmut craves vengeance against the elves, he hates all life and fights any mortal army he can strike at.

The forces of undeath are on the march, and Nerull smiles upon them. Who can stop the Reaper of Life? D

SLAUGHTERPIT GNOLL ZOMBIE

Medium-Size Undead
Hit Dice: 4d12+3 (29 hp)
Initiative: -1 (Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 17 (+4 chain shirt, +2 natural, +2 large shield, -1 Dex)
Attacks: Longsword +4 melee, battle axe +4 melee
Damage: Longsword d8+3, battleaxe d8+3
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./ 5 ft.
Special Attacks: Superior two-weapon fighting
Special Qualities: Undead, partial actions only
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1
Feats: Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, squad (3-12), or mob (16-25)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Neutral evil
Advancement: 5-7 HD (Medium-size), 8-12 HD (Large)

Some of the necromancers of the Red Scythe are of questionable sanity. They are not content to simply animate the dead; they want to find a way to make them "better" than they were in life. Slaughterpit Gnoll Zombies are the result of one such experiment. Two extra arms and one extra head have been sewn on to a gnoll corpse, thus improving upon nature's design. While this may please Nerull, it makes the adepts of Yeenoghu mad for vengeance.

Combat

Although as slow as other zombies, the slaughterpits pack more of a punch with their two weapon fighting. Ahmut and his war leaders use them as shock troops, and they have broken more than one battle line.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): A slaughterpit gnoll zombie fights with a battleaxe in one hand and a longsword in another. Because each of its two heads controls an arm, the zombie does not suffer an attack or damage penalty for attacking with two weapons and it can attack with both weapons as a partial action.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Partial Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but they can do both only if they charge (a partial charge).

WIZARDS WORKSHOP

CHAINMAIL 88
Who's afraid of the big, bad Ahmut? Well, just about everybody.

FORUM 90
A doctor pronounces Wizards of the Coast old-school PC while powergamers unravel the mysteries of math.

SILICON SORCERY 94
Arcanum might not be your typical fantasy fare but it still offers D&D players plenty of material.

SAGE ADVICE 96
Who knew clerics and paladins could present such a complicated mess? The sage straightens it all out.

THE PLAY'S THE THING 100
You say tomato, I say tomatoeth. Race gets a few perks from Robin Laws.

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On the third day you get to create stuff like merchants.

PC PORTRAITS 106
Seasoned adventurers pause to have their pictures drawn.

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Combat can now be one of the fastest parts of your game.

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PC or not to PC?

I would like to dispute several points made by Jason Moscatello in *DRAGON* #283 and Julie Ratliff in issue #280.

Jason Moscatello claims that the use of "she" as the neuter pronoun in D&D is simply a Wizards of the Coast marketing ploy to attract more female gamers. It is not, he assures us, part of a political agenda. I disagree.

Contrary to what Jason Moscatello and Julie Ratliff contend, D&D did not suddenly become politically "correct" with the new edition. The transition occurred gradually but sporadically over the past twelve years. It began when Strength differences between male and female characters were eliminated in 2nd Edition. It continued with illustrations of women impressing men with feats of strength and the use of "she" as the neuter pronoun in the later 2nd Edition books, and it persists in the most recent incarnation of the game, with half of all examples referring to women. Yet despite these overtures to women over quite a long time, men still make up the vast majority of D&D players. The numbers of women playing D&D is certainly not at levels one might expect if the "passive sexism" (to use Jason Moscatello's expression) of earlier D&D material were to blame for the proportion of men in the hobby. The "sexism" of previous editions has declined over a period of years. By Julie Ratliff's own admission, it has now gone. So where are the women?

For the most part, women are still not playing D&D. While, there might have been a very slight increase in the proportion of female gamers, this has to do with the increasing average age of D&D players. Older D&D enthusiasts have introduced their girlfriends, wives, and now even daughters to the hobby. There has also been a shift in the style of play away from the hack-n-slash dungeon crawls that tend to appeal to young males and not so much to females. Over the last decade or so, D&D campaigns that involve more character and plot development have become popular with some mature male players. As Julie Ratliff herself points out, this style of play also suits women.

The preference shown by female gamers for a particular style of play and for certain games that encourage this style (another point made by Julie Ratliff) suggests that there are real psychological differences between men and women. D&D, with its emphasis on combat, appears to tap aspects of the male psyche more effectively than it does features of the female. That's not just my opinion. It's a possibility mentioned by Dr. J. Eric Holmes, a physician and editor of one of the earliest versions of D&D, in his book *Fantasy Role Playing Games*. Gary Gygax goes even further when he states that "[as] a biological determinant, I think men think differently than women do, and games are basically a male pursuit" (cited from Computer Games Online at www.cdmag.com).

> ***If you're not interested in D&D, no amount of appealing to your sexual orientation is going to change that.***

The shrewd marketing team at Wizards of the Coast (and the TSR marketing people before them) would know about such a fundamental difference between the sexes. It would not have escaped their notice that attempts to woo females using political "correctness" fall on deaf ears. That only leaves one explanation for the widespread politicization of D&D: an ideological agenda. The anonymous contributor to issue #280 was right all along, and Jason Moscatello wasn't.

Jason Moscatello then switches tack and adopts a position similar to Julie Ratliff's by claiming that D&D's use of feminist-friendly language and examples is merely more inclusive, and that an absence of such language is exclusive. He invites male readers to see D&D from a female perspective. I do not need to imagine what it must be like to be a minority; I am already a member of one of the most persecuted minorities in history. I am not just outnumbered among roleplaying gamers but also in society at large. There are very few references to my ethnic group in D&D. There never have been. That didn't stop me from becoming interested in the game nearly twenty years ago. If the rules had included contrived allusions to my culture, as they do now for women, it wouldn't have attracted a single additional player. If you're not interested in D&D, no amount of appealing to your race, creed, sex, or sexual orientation is going to change that.

Advocates of political "correctness" in D&D, such as Jason Moscatello and Julie Ratliff, might argue that it doesn't do any harm and might do some good, so there's no reason to exclude it. They fail to consider or simply don't care that there might be a downside to it. The con is that gamers who don't share Jason Moscatello's and Julie Ratliff's political beliefs feel alienated by D&D as it now stands. Jason Moscatello and Julie Ratliff should try to imagine what it must be like to be repeatedly reminded of an ideology with which they strongly disagree every time they open a D&D book or read a copy of *DRAGON Magazine*.

I'm as dedicated a D&D fan as you'll find anywhere, but even I was dismayed at the politicization of D&D over the years, and I almost did not buy 3rd Edition because of it. Presumably, that's what Jason Moscatello and Julie Ratliff want: a game devoid of people who do not share their political opinions. That isn't inclusive of them at all.

Alexander F. Simkin, Ph.D.
London, England

My Wizard Can Beat Up Your Wizard

It seems likely that 1st-level wizards played by Robert Kloeckner (who wrote in "Forum" issue #284) would quickly die in any edition of D&D, as he habitually directs them to pick fights. This leads me to question Robert's ability to convincingly play a character of genius intelligence, if you get my drift.

In his examples, Robert has his wizard concentrating on doing damage with *shocking grasp*. If my character had 4 hit points, I'd be concentrating on *avoiding* damage. Why doesn't this alleged intellectual juggernaut *charm* his enemy? How about *sleep*? *Color spray*? Why does he even allow the opponent to get close enough to hit him (*spider climb, mount, expeditious retreat, jump*)? And if the new young wizard isn't prepared to fight this opponent, why is he out all alone causing trouble in the first place?

If we jump ahead to 6th level, Robert's comparison between wizard and fighter is just surreal. I once again affirm that if a wizard is going to go out looking for a dust-up, he must be assumed to be prepared for it—if not, he's just suicidal. I will leave out of the example the numerous low-level mercenaries such a wizard would hire to back him up; however, he has used divinations to find his enemies' location and look over their defenses.

Coming in sight of his enemies, my wizard reads off a few *fireballs* from scrolls, then softens them up further with summoned monsters, *stinking cloud, hold person*, ranged damage spells, and so on.

Just off the top of my head, if I ran a combat-obsessed, quasi-insane melee mage, he would go into this fight *invisible, flying, mage-armored, shielded*, and bearing a high-damage polearm with reach (I like the ranseur). Since this mage considers his only function to be to hurt things, he has taken Expertise, Weapon Proficiency (ranseur), and Weapon Focus as feats. He has cast upon himself *bull's strength, cat's grace, protection from evil, protection from arrows, haste*, and *blink*. My ranseur is +2 (courtesy of *greater magic weapon*) and I have four *true strike* spells if I need them. (Note: all the protection-, enhancement-, and movement-oriented spells noted above are cast from scrolls just before the fight, leaving the mage's normal daily slots available for use during the melee. Although insane, he does have genius Intelligence.) Several times, I will be able to cause an opponent to lose an action (with *daze*), and if I drop low on hit points, I can use *vampiric touch* to even the score. Why does Robert's mage slouch into battle naked with nothing but two *fireball* spells? Is he really, really depressed?

There are numerous ways to combine the wizard's intelligence-gathering and environment-affecting abilities (not to mention his ability to craft exactly the scrolls, plus potions or wands, he needs), so that his enemies can be neutralized before they ever see him. Robert doesn't really seem to want to play a wizard. The appeal of this class is its versatility. The fighter is a terrifying opponent in a battle, but he's not much else; wizards are capable of invoking many different types of effects, and they can do a lot more than just cause damage. What if each of the 1st-level characters met a foreign enemy from whom they needed information? Suddenly *charm person* and *comprehend languages* stack up a lot better than 1d8+6 damage per round. Got 10,000 orcs in platemail coming at you? The smart money takes the 20th-level wizard's *cloudkill, move earth, teleport*, and *wish* as tactical options over the fighter's four attacks per round (even with Great Cleave or what-have-you).

Robert also seems to imply that the new edition is unavoidably more melee-oriented than previous editions. This is a bag of crap. You can't fight anything your DM doesn't throw at you; if you find yourself fighting more often than you enjoy, tell him or her. There's a great article for DMs in issue #284 that addresses this very problem.

Sometimes you can't blame the rules system.

J. Ormond • Chicago, IL

Math is Hard

In response to Robert Kloeckner's letter about wizards being unable to match a fighter in combat damage, I would like to point out that he was adding the fighter's base attack bonus to his damage rolls. Last I checked, a base attack

THE UNSPEAKABLE OAF by John Kovalic

bonus is applied to "to hit" rolls, not to damage rolls. A 6th-level wizard can deal 36 points of damage with a *fireball*, but I don't see how a fighter would inflict 38 points of damage with a longsword and two attacks per round. I know I'm coming off as a rules lawyer, but you should know the rules before you criticize them.

Jason Wright • Cleveland, OH

Thievery of the Good Sort

In the twelve years that I have been a DM, I have lifted, looted, and flat-out stolen ideas, characters, and situations from everywhere. I have borrowed Gandalf's supposed death in *The Fellowship of the Ring;* and one of my players' first characters was trapped in a caravan station, stalked by a demon remarkably similar to one of Giger's aliens. But far and away, the two most useful sources of inspiration for my campaign have been the Wheel of Time series by Robert Jordan and the *JLA* comic book.

Jordan's style of writing and characterization are a veritable "NPCs for Dummies." The Wheel of Time is the first series in which I actively remembered a host of small, bit characters. A simple speech pattern or odd mannerism was enough to make them stand out, and the background players actually do things important to the story. Jordan's writing style is also a tutorial on plotweaving (a term from a previous *DRAGON* article) and advancing multiple stories at once.

The Wheel of Time series is also a rich mine not just for its sheer volume of content but also its support medium. There are a plethora of websites devoted to it; artwork is available on many of these sites, as well as the series-inspired Wheel of Time card game. Visualizing an encounter, scenario, or features of a character are half of the difficulty I have as a DM, and the ease of overcoming these obstacles is a key factor in presenting new material to my players. Also, all the pieces of myth and classic fantasy I would want to lift for my own uses are already there. There are classic instances everywhere, like Rand's taking a *sword* from the *Stone* of Tear—a fortress.

In my campaign, a very long and drawn-out back story resulted in a player character being retired to NPC status when he was polymorphed into a squirrel. He was then given to the party's wizard as a familiar, and under magical experimentation, was allowed to recall his former life as a human. The wizard spent a great deal of time and effort trying to restore Eathan to full humanity, only to create a human familiar—similar to the Warders of the Wheel of Time. I was halfway through the telling of this story when I noticed the similarities and just decided to use Warders as a template. Everyone at my table (most of them Jordan fans themselves) knew what these characters represented. This strong back story makes the campaign seem more real. If Eathan could just live up to the image of Lan Mandragoran . . .

The second influence, the *Justice League of America* comic book, is much more recent. I have read comics for most of my life, but a recent story ("The Tower of Babel") prompted me to buy my first DC comic ever. The general premise was simple; Batman proved himself to be a control freak and possessed of tactics and technology he hoarded specifically to take down other members of the Justice League in case they ever went rogue. The plans and equipment are stolen and used against the League. The villain tries to enact his grand plan without their interference, only to be stopped at the last minute. The real story, however, was a half an issue of dialogue at the end, with debate on why Batman should be thrown out of the League on his pointy ear or allowed to stay.

In my campaign, a regular player's wife's first character was actually a mole, whose goal was to remove blackmail material from the party for a local crime lord (thank you Chris Perkins for your editorial on playing dirty). When the heist was successful and the party divided, both physically and in opinion on what to do next, the mole was revealed, and for the next half hour I sat back and watched some of the most intense and rewarding roleplaying I have ever seen. When they asked me why I was laughing so hard at them, I could only produce the "Tower of Babel" story, opened to the debate at the end. Except for the names, the words were the same.

Admittedly, both of these source materials are "high end," dealing with the fate of worlds or reality itself. But when we sit down to a table to play at being heroes, why settle for anything less? We have good landmarks in these source materials and others. The rest is forging our own path in a direction all our own, and that's where the real fun is.

Jim Castlebury • Address Withheld

Evil is as Evil Does

I was interested in Alexander H. MacLeod IV's question in "Forum" in DRAGON #284. As a long-time gamer, I remember all of the press about the "evils" of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. It was connected to violent tendencies in young people, drug use, satanism, and mental instability. It was blamed for unfortunate accidents and deaths. I think I still have some of the articles that connected the suicide of a young man with the game because the police found gaming materials in his room in their investigation.

I think things have changed somewhat. Fantasy and science fiction are more commonplace in entertainment (just take a look at the movie listings), and I think that this has softened the resistance not only to these genres but to roleplaying games as well. I also think that in education there has been a new resurgent push for creativity and imagination. We've begun to realize that there are more types of intelligence than math and verbal, and that these should be cultivated not only during childhood, but throughout life. "Roleplaying" has become a perfectly acceptable training technique in all sorts of companies, at all levels. Telemarketers train this way, along with human resource employees and managers. So the public has come to accept the uses of roleplaying in learning and making a "better" employee. Throw this in the mix with the interest in the Middle Ages and futuristic settings, and I think you have a public that is better suited to accept D&D.

This is not to say that there isn't some resistance, though people do still look at me (a 31-year old college professor) and screw up their face when I tell them I play D&D, I think it's more because they don't really know what it's about. The public needs scapegoats (just look up articles on "slackers," Marilyn Manson, and goths), and they will find plenty of places to lay blame. D&D, unfortunately, was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

So in all, I think D&D (kudos to the companies that stuck it through the rough times) isn't completely out of the woods yet, there are still questions the public has, but with organized gaming clubs, conventions, TV shows, books, and movies making fantasy and sci-fi "cool," those dense woods are thinning, and there looks to be sweet water ahead.

Sandra Salla • Address Withheld

Father Knows Best

After I read Elzbeth Maclain's letter ("All in the Family" in *Dragon* 283) about her many happy experiences introducing her son to Dungeons & Dragons, I looked back on one of my own happy gaming memories. In 1979 or 1980, my brother and I had received the Basic Set for Christmas. As we sat down to scribble out our fighter and magic-user tag team, we had one problem: Who would be Dungeon Master?

My dad ended any argument (or just wanted us to pipe down), and volunteered his services. He had never read the rules nor showed any interest before, but like any dad he felt the need to keep up the whole dad image.

So there we all were sitting on the floor of our living room, playing *Keep on the Borderlands* and having the time of our lives. Dad did not play much after that first dungeon delve, but our friends were always allowed to play at our house, even when gaming came under fire. I look back at those times and really have to applaud him for letting our imagination blossom all those years ago, watching his boys and their friends spend harmless summer nights playing with funny-looking dice, a few pieces of paper, and boundless imagination.

I totally applaud Elzbeth for keeping her son focused on real-life concerns by not only rewarding him with gaming time but by including him in her own gaming group as well! He is truly a lucky young man, and I hope that these are the days that both of them will look back on as truly golden moments in their relationship.

I only wish that there are more parents like Elzbeth out there, those who support and contribute to keeping the roleplaying game alive by passing it on to their children.

Scott Sloan
900 Copper Way
Vacaville, CA 95687

Weasel Gamer

I would just like to say that everyone should forget about Jean-Philippe's sexist house rule from issue 281.

The real issue at hand is weasels.

I'm looking in my *Monster Manual*, and I see this: Weasel, Tiny Animal, ½d8 (2 hp).

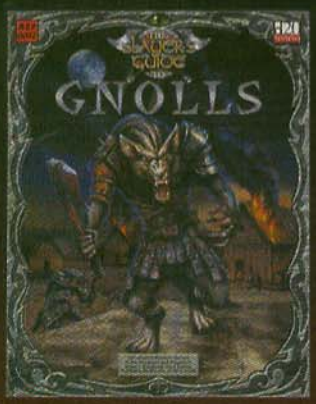
My first complaint starts here. I think a weasel should have a little more than 2 hp! I mean, come on! Weasels might get intestinal blockage very easily, but it's not like they're insects.

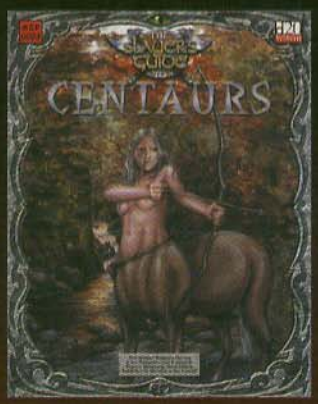
Also, I'd like to point out that a weasel's challenge rating is 1/4. Gosh! It could at least be 1! Sure they're tiny, but do you know how hard those things are to catch?

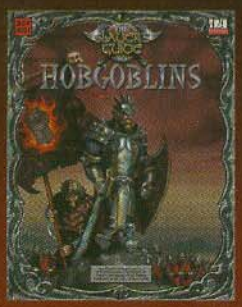
One last thing I want to point out is that weasels shouldn't get the normal animal Intelligence like all the other animals! They should have average human intellect, around 8 at least. Weasel's are truly intellectual creatures, capable of religion, poetry, culture, and politics. Give these creatures a little more credit!

Alex Strother • Augusta, GA

All an adventurer needs. . .







The next two Slayer's Guides have arrived. Lavishly detailing Gnolls and Centaurs, these sourcebooks provide an invaluable resource for Games Masters and Players alike.

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Dare you tread the Dark Road?

SILICON SORCERY

by Rick Moscatello

ARCANUM
Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura

Our game with good ideas this month is *Arcanum*, a fantasy/weird science roleplaying game from Sierra. *Arcanum* features a game world where both magic and technology thrive, although these two sources of power are often at odds.

One of many cool things about *Arcanum* is the ability to give your character a background. This background represents a part of your character's history, or a personal quirk, that affects your abilities. Backgrounds are different from feats or class- and race-based special abilities because they aren't completely beneficial. Such histories serve to further differentiate characters, as well as provide more opportunities for roleplaying.

RAISING A PROPER ADVENTURER

Naturally, a background should be chosen only when you create a new character, and a character should have only one background. These backgrounds are fairly balanced, but some are going to be more useful or powerful than others. DMs should carefully consider each before allowing characters to have one, and DMs might want to require interested players to pick a background instead of an initial feat.

MORE IDEAS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT

There are so many neat little doodads in Arcanum it's hard to properly explore the potential of all of them.

BORN UNDER A SIGN

It is said that when Kellogg the Ranger was born, the moon stayed full for three days, and it was taken as a sign that his destiny was to do great things. While his adventuring career was mostly unremarkable, stories are still told of the time he slew a hill giant with a single shot from his bow.

Your birth was marked by a peculiar astrological event, or possibly a volcanic eruption. For whatever reason, you tend to score critical hits less often, but they are more spectacular.

Benefit: Whenever you score a successful critical hit, roll a d6. On a roll of 1-3 the hit is instead treated as a normal hit, and damage is resolved normally. On a roll of 4-6 the multiplier is increased by 1. For example, if a critical hit would deal x2 damage, it deals x3 damage instead.

Note: If your campaign includes critical failures, they should similarly be affected by a character with this background.

WARNING

The material proposed in this article might present a threat to the balance of your D&D game.

HYDROPHOBIC

Elias Catspaw was the greatest thief and escape artist of his time, and it was said that no prison could hold him. Such was not the case. After his capture, he was left abandoned on a small isle not even a half mile offshore. There he lived the rest of his days. His secret had been discovered.

You are deathly afraid of the water. A lifetime of making up excuses and explanations for avoiding anything to do with water has made you a skillful liar.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Bluff checks. Your character will never willingly go into water (or other liquids), nor will he ride a boat if he can avoid it. When in or on water, your character suffers a -4 morale penalty to Dexterity, Intelligence, and Will saves but gains a +2 morale bonus to Strength out of sheer terror.

LADY'S MAN

James Bard was the only man in the city who could call the Queen "wench" to her face and keep his tongue in his head. He always had a way with the ladies, no matter their station.

You have a gift for dealing with members of the opposite gender. Alas, persons of the same gender tend to view you with suspicion and jealousy.

Benefit: In any Charisma-based skill check involving a person of opposite gender, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to the roll. If the check involves a person of the same gender, you suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to the roll.

"YOUR CAVE OR MINE?"
Gender-based skills and feats suggest a new aspect of roleplaying.

NIGHT MAGE

While it is certain that Mervin's parents were human, there were those who said there was a drow somewhere in his ancestry. How else to explain his spells' increased efficacy during the night and how they'd wane during the day?

Your spellcasting seems to be attuned to the moon; it is more powerful during the night and weaker during the day.

Benefit: Add +3 to the Difficulty Class of the saving throws of your spells cast at night. Your spells cast during the day suffer a -3 penalty to the DC of their saving throws.

Note: There could also be Day Mages, but *Arcanum's* "Indoor Mage" and "Outdoor Mage" are probably a bit too unbalancing.

RAISED BY SNAKE HANDLERS

"Crikey!" exclaimed Irwin the ranger, raising his hand to see a scorpion attached to it, stinging him with enthusiasm. The cleric rushed to give aid, but Irwin waved her off. "It's no problem, mate. I've been bitten by worse."

You were raised by a family of snake handlers.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves versus poison. Unfortunately, all the bite scars on your body give you a -2 modifier to any Charisma-based skill check.

STEAMPUNK USER INTERFACE
The "SPUI" offers steampunk fans plenty of doodads to use as flavor in their RPGs.

RAISED BY WOLVES

Nucklar the Half-Orc's human mother abandoned him to the woods, and he was raised by a friendly she-wolf. His upbringing gave him strength and fortitude, although not much in the way of table manners.

You were raised by animals. Seriously.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to both Strength and Constitution. You also suffer a -2 penalty to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, and you are illiterate, as per the Barbarian class.

ISOLATION PAYS
"I think I'll skip the party to work in the lab tonight."

SHELTERED CHILD

Hubert II was not the man his father was. Feeble, sickly, and ill-tempered, a career as a wandering adventurer seemed right for him—Hubert II tended to wear out his welcome wherever he went.

Your character was coddled and protected as a child. Such soft treatment and isolation did nothing for you physically, and you don't deal with people well, but your parents spared nothing on your education, giving you an agile mind.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom. You also suffer a -2 penalty to Strength, Constitution, and Charisma.

These backgrounds are just the beginning. A good DM, with the help of her players, should have little trouble working out more. Because there is a negative aspect to them, and because characters are limited to one, backgrounds can be somewhat better than feats. Still, you should be careful to keep things balanced, especially if ability scores are modified (the chart on page 24 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* is very helpful in such cases).

SAGE ADVICE

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This month, the Sage considers questions about Defenders of the Faith *and ponders a few other items of interest to clerics and paladins.*

When an arcane spellcaster gets access to the spells from one of the prestige domains from *Defenders of the Faith*, do those spells become arcane spells? If so, doesn't that mean that any arcane caster can learn them?

An arcane caster who gains access to the spells in a prestige domain can cast those spells as arcane spells, but they're still divine spells as far as the rest of the multiverse is concerned.

An arcane caster with access to a prestige domain could use spell trigger items that use spells on the prestige domain list, but could not read divine scrolls with those spells on them. If an arcane caster put a prestige domain spell on a scroll, it would be an arcane scroll, and only another arcane caster with access to that domain (or a character with the Use Magic Device skill) could use the scroll.

Sorcerers or bards who get access to a prestige domain add the domain's spells to the lists of spells they know, and wizards who get access to a prestige domain add the domain's spells to their spellbooks. These spells do not get added to the bard or sorcerer/wizard class list, and other bards, sorcerers, or wizards cannot learn them without first gaining access to the prestige domain.

Page 77 of *Defenders of the Faith* says you get another spell of each level when you gain a prestige domain. Does this extra spell have to be a domain spell? That is, could a wizard cast an extra *magic missile* each day, or could he cast only an extra domain spell?

Only paladins, rangers, and other divine casters, such as sacred fists, get an extra spell slot, and this slot has to be filled with the prestige domain spell from that level. Arcane casters don't get any extra spell slots each day. Clerics still have only one slot at each spell level for a domain spell, but they get an extra domain from which to choose their domain spells.

If you have levels in both a divine spellcasting class and an arcane spellcasting class, do you get to pick which one a prestige spellcaster class would stack with? Suppose Sheree has two levels of wizard and five levels of cleric and she decides to take a level of warpriest (giving her access to the Glory domain). Can she choose to stack the warpriest level with the wizard?

Does the sacred fist's unarmed damage stack with the monk's unarmed strike damage?

In most cases, the prestige class specifies how you can use the added spellcasting level. The warpriest specifies divine spellcasting but goes on to say that if you have more than one divine spellcasting class, you can choose which one you apply it to.

The divine oracle and sacred exorcist are the only two classes in *Defenders of the Faith* that don't specify how you can use the added spellcasting levels, and the book's designers assure me that's intentional. You can add the spellcasting level to an arcane spellcasting class if you like.

Many of the prestige classes in *Defenders of the Faith* have the ability to cast divine spells, but their levels don't stack for spells-per-day calculations. Even though both classes are casting the same spells, and all are divine spells, should you still record the available spells separately (as opposed to adding the available numbers together)? A similar situation exists for clerics and paladins (and, for that matter, wizards and sorcerers.)

As "Sage Advice" has pointed out before, you keep a separate list of spells for each class when you're a multiclassed spellcaster. The spellcasting abilities from your classes don't stack in any way. For example, if you're a 5th-level cleric and 5th-level wizard, your caster level is 5 in each class.

The descriptive paragraph for the sacred fist prestige class in *Defenders of the Faith* mentions that they can cast only spells with a range of touch; however, this is not mentioned in the Class Features section. The Code of Conduct section mentions only a prohibition against weapons and medium and heavy armor. The Spell List section mentions the restriction to spells with a range of touch or personal, but that seems to imply that only spells gained as a sacred fist have this restriction. Does it apply to all spells a sacred fist character can cast, even those which were gained as another class? Also, does a sacred fist lose his class abilities if he uses spells (arcane or divine) from other classes that have a range other than touch or personal?

Sacred fists can use whatever spells they have freely, whatever their range entries. Sacred fists cannot use weapons; spells are not "weapons" for purposes of the sacred fist's code of conduct. Passing references to a ban on ranged spells are unwanted artifacts from an earlier version of the class. **This is official errata.**

The sacred fist seems to be the only prestige class in *Defenders of the Faith* that gives access to an additional domain but does not add levels to an existing spellcasting class to determine the number of spells per day. Does this mean that the domain spells follow the progression of the sacred fist class? For example, say that Lyrian is a cleric 5/sacred fist 4 who chose the Celerity

domain as a sacred fist; would he be able to cast Air Walk (Celerity 3) because he can cast 3rd-level spells as a cleric 6, or would he be restricted to cat's grace (Celerity 2) because he is only a sacred fist 4? What if Lyrian was a cleric 1/fighter 4/sacred fist 4?

When you add a domain as a sacred fist, you add that domain to your sacred fist spellcasting ability. You get the granted power from the domain. As a divine spellcaster who is not a cleric, you get one extra domain spell each day for each level of spell you can cast as a sacred fist (see the discussion of prestige domains on page 77 of *Defenders of the Faith*). Since both versions of the character in your example have 4 sacred fist levels, the character would gain the 1st- and 2nd-level Celerity spells (*blur* and *cat's grace*) as domain spells.

Does the sacred fist's unarmed damage stack with the monk's unarmed strike damage? Does the sacred fist's puissant fists ability stack with the monk's ki strike ability?

A monk/sacred fist uses her sacred fist unarmed damage or the monk unarmed damage, whichever is better. Likewise, the character uses her ki strike or puissant fist ability, whichever bypasses the most damage reduction.

Does the sacred fist's evasion and uncanny dodge abilities stack with the abilities of the same name that a character might have from another class?

If the sacred fist already has these powers from another class, he can add his sacred fist levels to the existing class levels (or vice versa) to determine when he gets them and how powerful they are.

The sacred fist's spell list includes spells of level 0 thorough 5, yet the class table only shows spells of level 1 to 4.

The level 0 and level 5 lists are errors. **This is official errata.**

The description for the hospitaler prestige class in *Defenders of the Faith* first says a hospitaler gains levels as a cleric for purposes of spell-casting as well as full access to all cleric spells, and then later it says the hospitaler levels are simply added to pre-existing caster levels (under Spells per Day). Which one is right?

The first entry (Spells) is incorrect. Use the second entry (Spell per Day) instead. In addition, Table 3–7 should have a Spells per Day column, which should read "+1 level of existing class" at each level. **This is official errata.**

The table for the hospitaler prestige class shows the ability to turn undead at 1st level. However, the class description has no mention of this ability. Does it stack with pre-existing turning ability, or is it a misprint and an ability not available to the class?

Hospitalers gain the ability to turn undead at 3rd level, not 1st level. The character turns undead at her hospitaler level, -2. This stacks with undead turning from other classes. Add the character's hospitaler level -2 to the class level for any other class that has turning ability. For example, a 6th-level cleric/4th-level hospitaler turns undead as an 8th-level character. Note that paladins also use their class level -2 to determine their undead turning level, so a 6th-level paladin/4th-level hospitaler level turns undead as a 6th-level character. **This is official errata.**

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HORSE SENSE

The *Monster Manual* lists the heavy horse and heavy war horses as having a base speed of 50 feet. Yet page 143 of the *Player's Handbook* says a heavy horse has a base (unburdened) movement of 40 miles per day (which equates to a speed of 50) and a heavy warhorse has a base (unburdened) movement of 32 miles per day (which equates to a speed of 40). Which is correct?

The *Monster Manual* is correct. Both the heavy horse and the heavy warhorse have the same base speed and daily movement rate (50 feet, 40 miles a day).

It seems that when a creature is burdened (carrying a medium or heavy load) its movement is reduced. But what is the formula for that reduction? Is it simply reducing the speed by 10 feet? (For creatures with base speeds of 40 feet and 30 feet that works.) Or does the creature lose some fraction of its speed? How does this encumbered movement affect a creature's speed on the local or overland scale?

Encumbered movement is explained on page 142 in the *Player's Handbook* (Table 9–2). You can figure out any creature's encumbered movement by comparing base speed to Table 9–2 (which shows base speeds of 20 and 30 feet.) To find encumbered speed for other creatures, just add up the values for slower creatures. For example a creature with speed of 60 moves twice as fast as a creature with a speed of 30, so it's encumbered speed is 40 feet.

COMMON ENCUMBERED SPEEDS ARE:

Speed	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	15	10	5
Enc. Speed	70	65	60	50	40	35	30	20	15	10	5	5

You can use the same method to find a creature's speed on the local or overland scales.

COMMON LOCAL AND OVERLAND SPEEDS ARE:

ONE MINUTE (LOCAL)

Speed*	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	15	10	5
Walk	1,000	900	800	700	600	500	400	300	200	150	100	50
Hustle	2,000	1,800	1,600	1,400	1,200	1,000	800	600	400	300	200	100
Run (×3)	3,000	2,700	2,400	2,100	1,800	1,500	1,200	900	600	450	300	150
Run (×4)	4,000	3,600	3,200	2,800	2,400	2,000	1,600	1,200	800	600	400	200

ONE HOUR (OVERLAND)**

Speed*	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	15	10	5
Walk	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1.5	1	.5
Hustle	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2	1

ONE DAY (OVERLAND)**

Speed*	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	15	10	5
Walk	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	12	8	4

*Use normal or encumbered speed, whichever applies to the creature.

**Overland movement is measured in miles.

There is a sidebar titled Ghosts and Vampires on page 67 of *Defenders of the Faith*. The sidebar says a master of shrouds can choose to summon these creatures in place of those a master of shrouds could normally summon. However, the number summoned is not shown, and this ability is not referred to in the main text for the prestige class. How many vampires or ghosts are summoned?

The sidebar in question shouldn't be there at all (it was supposed to be cut from the book). You can ignore the sidebar, or you can assume that the character can summon ghosts or vampires of the same CR as the other undead the character can summon, and in the same numbers. Each use counts against the character's total summoning limit for the day. Because both ghosts and vampires are template creatures with variable abilities, you'll need to create statistics for the creatures ahead of time.

Note that a master of shrouds summons undead three times a day plus Charisma *modifier* (minimum once), and that the character's level determines how powerful the undead creatures summoned can be (that is, a 10th-level master of shrouds with an 18 Charisma summons undead 7 times a day, not 24 times a day as some people seem to think the text implies).

The description for the *battle rod* on page 25 of *Defenders of the Faith* mentions that the item gives allies a +2 morale bonus but does not specify what this bonus affects.

Saves against fear effects.

The knight of the chalice prestige class from *Defenders of the Faith* specifically says the class has powers that affect demons. Does this exclude devils, or does "demons" in this sense mean all lower planar creatures (demons, devils, and so on)?

It means demons (denizens of the Abyss). If the power worked against all so-called lower planar creatures, the text would say so, or it would use the term "fiends."

Page 90 in the *Player's Handbook* has a rule that says the various racial deities can only have clerics of the correct races. For example, only dwarves can be clerics of Moradin. Does this rule also apply to other divine spellcasters, such as rangers and paladins?

No. The rule is only for clerics. Technically, the rule governing cleric alignments on page 30 of the *Player's Handbook* also only applies to clerics. Paladins and rangers, for example, can have alignments considerably different from the deities they serve (though paladins by practical necessity serve good deities, usually lawful good deities).

I'm thinking about making a wizard character multiclassed by adding a level of cleric. The wizard has a familiar. When the wizard starts gaining levels as a cleric, can the familiar deliver cleric spells that have touch range?

If the character already is at least a 3rd-level wizard, the character has the touch ability, and the familiar can deliver any spell with a range of touch that the master casts, no matter what class the spell is from. The familiar also can share any spell the master casts (subject to the limits of that ability). The character's cleric levels, however, don't increase the familiar's natural armor, Intelligence, or special abilities.

Can a multiclassed character who can cast both divine and arcane spells use the spells from one class to affect spells from another class? For example, can a cleric/wizard cast *spectral hand* and use it to deliver a cleric spell with a touch range?

Unless the spell description specifically says it only works on a certain kind of spell, it will work on any spell the character casts. The *spectral hand* description says the spell works on any touch range spell of 4th level or lower; the effect is not limited to arcane spells.

Would it be possible to multiclass as two different types of cleric and gain four domain powers?

No, you can take a class only once.

One of the *protection from evil* spell's effects grants the subject a +2 deflection bonus to Armor Class and a +2 resistance bonus on saves. Both of these bonuses apply against attacks made by evil creatures. To cast a spell isn't an attack action but a magic action. Does that mean that the bonus from protection from evil only applies if the caster of the spell has to make a touch attack or ranged touch attack to affect the protected target? Or does it apply to any spells cast by evil creatures?

A spell is an "attack" whenever its target, area, or effect includes a foe. See Special Spell Effects on page 152 of the *Player's Handbook*.

It's possible that both the Armor Class and the save bonus from protection from evil could apply to the same effect. For example, the *disintegrate* spell produces a ray that requires a ranged touch attack, so the protection from evil spell's deflection bonus to Armor Class applies to that attack if the spell's caster is evil. *Disintegrate* also allows a Fortitude save. If the caster is evil, a *protection from evil* spell provides a saving throw bonus as well.

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by Robin D. Laws • illustrated by John Kovalic

Get Yourself Some Sub-Culture

DM | As you draw nearer to the encamped caravaneers, you see that they're halflings. Their wagons are colorfully painted. Some of them seem to be readying a performance of some kind for the crowd of gawking farmers gathered around them. Others are laying their wares out on tables.

PLAYER | Great! You're playing a halfling—you go talk to them and see if they'll *lend* us the money to construct that winch we need.

YOU | [In character, as Röedling the Wastes-Walker] "Hmpf! Halflings they might be, but of the most common sort. I was raised in the Gravid Steppes far from the fripperies of such frivolous folk."

Last month, we addressed the role that stereotypes fulfill in making roleplaying easier. When you begin, you can take race and class descriptions straight from the rulebook and teach yourself to portray a character by sticking to the traits provided. Then, as you get the itch to expand your repertoire a little, you can use the stereotypes as a basic theme over which you can lay your own variations.

This month, let's take that idea one step further. Concentrating specifically on racial traits, we'll look at ways in which you can annex your own tiny corner of the DM's world to customize it according to your own preferences.

The D&D races are popular because they're familiar, easy to understand, and fun to play. Within that basic familiarity, though, lies plenty of room for individual interpretation. Most people who've read a certain amount of fantasy fiction, or gamed for a while, develop their own favorite takes on the major races. Look at elves, for example. You might prefer the noble, vanishing aristocrats of Tolkien's Middle-Earth, or the fierce, Nordic weirdlings of Poul Anderson's *The Broken Sword*. Even the D&D game's standard portrayal of elves has evolved over the years, so sourcebooks and articles published at different times depict elves in slightly varying ways.

In her campaign, your DM has either chosen her favorite version of elves or (more likely) mixed and matched elements to create her own hybrid. During play, you might have heard the phrase "well, in my world, elves are . . ." on numerous occasions. The flexibility that D&D allows her in doing this is, of course, one of its great strengths.

Just as there's no rule that says your DM has to stick to the current, "official" interpretation of D&D races, there's also no reason for you to constrain your own creativity when playing non-human characters. Maybe you feel your DM goes too far in playing halflings as comic Englishmen. You still fondly remember your favorite character, a grim, survivalist halfling from an old Dark Sun campaign. You'd like to turn your current halfling character into a spiritual cousin of this long-dead predecessor.

The way to do this is to get the DM's permission to create a sub-culture. Logically speaking, no race should have one monolithic culture. In the real world, humans have thrown up a dazzling variety of cultures with different organizations, beliefs, and customs. Any article on a D&D culture should be read as if it contains a zillion invisible qualifiers, reminding you that the statements it makes are general, that regional variations are immense, and that somewhere in the world there's a group that turns every fact in the article on its head. (Excessive qualifiers turn any piece of writing into a boring, mushy mess, so they're kept invisible for good reason.)

There is a right way and a wrong way to make this request of your DM.

Right Way: "I'd like my halfling to come from an area where they have to be tough to survive and learn from an early age that the world is full of horrible dangers."

Wrong Way: "Your halflings chew rubber monkey lungs."

In other words, make it clear that you don't want to trample her cherished portrayal of the race in question. Your PC will come from a distant, isolated locale, and his sub-culture is an exception to the rule.

When you create a sub-culture, start by listing the cultural traits you want your character to have. Since this PC might be the only one of his people to show up in a game, there's no need to twist yourself into knots creating a culture and then determining how far the character deviates from it. Make the PC's values and the culture's the same. Be prepared for the DM to throw some changes at you if the PC returns home, or if your sub-culture otherwise captures her imagination and leads her to create NPCs brought up in it.

Next, take the standard racial description in the *Player's Handbook* and make a list of its major traits. Let's say that the DM tells you that her halflings are comfort-loving homebodies possessed of great curiosity, a mania for collecting, and an outgoing nature. The list will look like this:

- curiosity
- collecting
- comfort
- homebodies
- outgoing

Then add a second column, showing the corresponding values of your sub-culture. You'll likely have to use longer phrases, since you're expressing new ideas, not just encapsulating current ones.

Culture	Sub-Culture
curiosity	alertness
collecting	own only what you can carry
comfort	austerity
homebodies	wanderers
outgoing	haughty sense of superiority

You don't have to make every sub-cultural value the opposite of the baseline culture. If you depart too much from the norm, you might leave the DM and other players wondering why you bothered with this race at all. Make sure that your sub-culture maintains a balance of negative and positive traits, and that your PC (if not others of his kind) has a reason to adventure and to cooperate with other party members.

You can write up a full description of the sub-culture in the format used for the *Player's Handbook* races, or just stick to your point-form chart.

The advantage of creating a sub-culture for your character is that you feel an increased sense of creative involvement with your PC in particular, and the campaign as a whole. You get to play the race the way you see it, escaping the constraints the DM's standard version would otherwise place on you.

However, there are consequences to keep in mind. Your PC won't be able to mix with others of his race as smoothly as an off-the-rack character could. The standard halflings of your DM's world might look askance at him. He's probably a wanderer, far from his community. Others might regard him as an object of curiosity, bringing unwanted attention. If he wears war paint and a loin-cloth when the standard local attire for his race is a tunic, leggings, and cloak, he'll find it hard to remain inconspicuous while on his daily rounds.

As long as you're aware of the pitfalls, these disadvantages should fall into the category of entertaining challenge, not game-halting irritation.

So the next time the DM interprets your favorite race in your least favorite way, don't just fret. Instead, add something to her campaign.

PLAYER | That doesn't mean you'll annoy them and start a fight, does it?

YOU | "Hmpf! My people do not shed our blood for trivial causes! I shall be the soul of diplomacy, as always!"

PLAYER | Maybe we should send the half-orc . . .

"MY FAVORITE BAND? THE SUB-CULTURE CLUB."

by Ray Winninger

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Janda's Valley, Part II

Last month, we started thinking about building a settlement to serve as the players' "home base" during the early portion of the Lost World campaign. After a bit of soul-searching, we settled upon an isolated, easily defensible valley that is home to a self-exiled Solaani (elven) sorceress named Janda, as well as her followers. Not only is Janda's Valley one of the few relatively civilized communities across the whole of the Lost World, it's also one of the few permanent settlements in which members of all the region's most important tribes live side-by-side.

Last month, we created a relatively sophisticated backstory for the Valley along with a few juicy secrets (as required by the Second Rule of Dungeoncraft). This month, let's begin detailing Janda's Valley. When we first crafted a home base (the Ironoak Stronghold for the Aris campaign, way back in *DRAGON* #260 and #261), the result was rather sketchy, providing only as much information as we needed to give the players, with a few essential services and an overall impression of what their life was like between adventures. This time, let's create enough detail to run the occasional "town adventure" set in the base. The result should provide a solid example of a well-detailed home base that you can use as a blueprint for your campaign. This level of detail is usually not essential at this stage in a campaign's development, but it can prove useful. If you think you have the time and motivation to create a detailed base, the effort is probably worthwhile. If you're pressed for time or you're just anxious to start playing, though, you should stick with the less detailed approach we adopted in the earlier installment.

The Map

The first thing we need is a nice detailed map of the area. You've heard this advice before, but it's worth repeating: when drawing a map for use with a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign, it's almost always a good idea to use graph paper. That way, you'll be able to quickly judge distances, ranges, movement rates, and all sorts of other rules-related quantities quickly and easily during play. It's especially important to use graph paper when sketching out Janda's Valley, since we hope to run adventures set here.

When drawing just about any map, the first thing to consider is scale—just how big is the area you're trying to map? Once you decide upon an appropriate scale, you can quickly calculate the distance each square on the graph paper should represent. Janda's Valley should house a series of tents and structures spread out across a quarter mile or so, all neatly contained within a mountain pass. Since my graph paper sports five squares to the inch, a page is about 40 squares from top to bottom. A quarter mile is 1,320 feet, which translates into just about thirty feet per square to make the map stretch across the length of a single sheet of paper. This is a pretty good scale for mapping a town or village. It's small enough that your maps can feature individual buildings and landmarks, but large enough that the resulting village map is conveniently sized.

Try beginning with two sheets of blank paper when drawing your maps. On the first, make a rough sketch of the layout; this lets you gauge approximate shapes and distances. On the same sheet, make a list of all the locations the map should ultimately feature, then plot their general vicinities on the sketch. During this first phase, you'll probably experiment with the overall shape of the terrain and move lots of features all over the page until everything is placed to your satisfaction. Only after the preliminary sketch is complete should you try to draw the final map (on the second sheet), filling in all the necessary details. Basically, this method allows you to make nice clean maps without lots of messy erasing, letting you tweak the map as you compose it.

There's no special processes to arrive at such a list. Just freely brainstorm on two specific topics—what sort of features Janda and her guests would logically need to survive, and what features might be interesting or "cool." We'll address the reasoning behind each location in their individual descriptions later, but for now, here are the results for Janda's Valley:

- Two well-defended gates
- Ruins
- Guard Barracks
- Guard Kennel
- Pterosaur Aerie
- Stream
- Manor dwellings
- A tangled mass of dwellings for less wealthy inhabitants
- A fishing area
- A primitive agriculture center
- A "moot circle"
- A tent bazaar
- A temple
- A large palace for Janda

Once the list of locations is complete and the map has been drawn, it's time to start writing detailed notes on each of the map's most important features. Although this takes a lot of work, resist the urge to "wing it" and trust your map and memory alone to get you through once play begins. Improvising on such a grand scale is a skill that only the very finest Dungeon Masters possess, and appropriate preparation vastly improves even their games.

As a general rule, the more prepared you are for your game sessions, the more fun they'll be.

When drawing just about any map, the first thing to consider is scale.

Your notes on a detailed base might look like those below. Any "behind the scenes" comments appear beneath the notes in italicized text. Again, if you don't think you have the time or inclination to draw up notes that are this detailed, just shelve the whole project for now and create a less detailed base using the approach adopted last time.

As a general rule, you should use your location notes to capture three things:

1. Details you might forget. When you look back at your map later, you might not remember what you meant by "Merchant Quarter." (What merchants? What do they sell?) For this reason, it's generally a good idea to record as much info as you can. As you write, though, don't forget the First Rule of Dungeoncraft. Right now, you definitely don't need to know how those merchants came to this village, where they made their money or how their parents died.

2. Descriptive details that help bring the location to life. One of the main dividends you'll earn by developing your home base in detail is a whole host of descriptive tidbits that will help the setting come to life in the imaginations of your players. As a general rule, the more work you put into your

creation, the more real it will seem and the more memorable your campaign will become. For this reason, you might try to come up with one or two distinctive features for each of the locations on your map. As you provide descriptions during play, you can consistently emphasize these features to make the location more vivid in the players' imaginations.

3. Notes that will help you resolve mechanical situations that might arise during play. If you plan on running the occasional town adventure set in your home base, you might need to know how often the guards patrol each part of town, the Difficulty Classes of various locks, and all sorts of other mechanical details. When you're creating your initial notes, it's a good idea to anticipate as many of these needs as possible and jot down some quick answers so you won't have to stop and think about some of these things once play begins.

We discussed the tax and the reasoning behind it in last month's installment.

Janda's Soldiers: Janda's soldiers wear scale mail and are armed with stone glaives and shortswords. They have the following statistics:

Soldier, Elf Ftr1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +2 melee (1d10+1/crit x3, glaive), or +2 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, short sword); SQ Elven racial traits; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Listen +7, Spot +7, Search +5.

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes.

Obviously, these statistics will come in handy in all sorts of situations once play begins. The fact that all of Janda's soldiers are 1st-level fighters is somewhat extraordinary (normally, they'd be warriors as described on page 39 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). The Lost World is a tough place, though, and Janda's crew is supposed to be special.*

The more work you put into your creation, the more real it will seem.

Janda's Valley–General Notes

Taxation: Everyone who enters the valley must pay a tax equivalent to 30% of all the coins and other valuables he is carrying. This tax applies to gems, jewels, and trade goods, but not to magic items or personal equipment (like weapons and adventuring gear). During the day, when both gates leading into the valley are open, one of Janda's minor bureaucrats is usually stationed at each entrance to appraise every visitor's valuables and collect the tax.

Anyone caught entering the valley without paying the tax (or concealing items in order to pay a reduced amount) must instead pay a 50% tax and spend two weeks in the Pits (described later). If the guilty party is unable to pay the tax once apprehended, he must pay in the form of menial labor (usually maintenance work on the valley's structures).

Note that we didn't go to the trouble of creating complete characters for each guard. We listed only the important abilities likely to arise during play—remember that First Rule of Dungeoncraft.

Fire Towers: Scattered throughout the valley are a number of iron braziers sitting atop 10-foot tall stone towers. Just before dusk, a detachment of soldiers moves through the valley and lights large bonfires in all these braziers for illumination around the compound. The braziers are then extinguished each morning at sunup. Each fire tower illuminates everything within 90 feet (three squares on the map).

The fire towers make it a little bit trickier to sneak around key areas of the valley at night. Their existence is also justified logically. Janda's soldiers have to be on the lookout for predatory dinosaurs that might try to enter the camp at night.

Janda's Valley–Keyed Locations

1. Main Gate: The largest mountain pass that leads into the valley is approximately 600 feet across. A large plateau (30 feet tall) divides the pass into two sections. Shortly after they moved in, Janda and her followers built solid stoneworks across both sections. Each of the stoneworks consists of two parallel walls (25 feet high and 3 feet thick) separated by about 20 feet. A couple of iron portcullises in the inner wall provide access to the hollow space between the walls. The whole structure is covered with a wooden catwalk and stone parapets, allowing Janda's troops to man the walls and fend off invaders. Ten soldiers man the larger stonework at all times. Four soldiers man the smaller. Atop the larger stonework is one of the soldiers' signal horns.

In the midst of the larger stonework is the massive main gate that was constructed from the ribs of a diplodocus (a huge dinosaur) and reinforced with iron. The gate is opened and closed by four of the soldiers atop the stonework turning a pair of huge cranks. Opening or closing the gate requires a Strength check (DC 28). The soldiers normally take 20 and use the Cooperation rules, allowing them to automatically open or close the gate in two minutes, or 20 combat rounds. Attempts to move the gate any faster or with fewer participants might fail. Under normal circumstances, the gate is opened every morning at dawn and closed each night at dusk. If the gate is open when the signal horn is blown, the soldiers immediately begin to close it.

Just inside the gate are the remains of two enormous statues of triceratops dinosaurs. The statues were built hundreds of years earlier by the lizardfolk civilization that once dominated the Lost World (see **The Ruins** entry next issue).

There are archways in both walls of the stonework that block the smaller portion of the mountain pass in order to allow a stream to flow through and into the valley. Both archways are covered, however, by a series of iron bars that run from the top of the arch down several feet into the bed of the stream. The bars allow water and small fish to pass through, but prevent larger creatures (like humans) from using the stream to enter the valley undetected. Most of the bars are severely rusted below the waterline, though, and can be

broken (Strength check, DC 23). *This is the gate the adventurers will usually use to pass in and out of the valley. Most of these notes are intended to help resolve various mechanical situations that might arise during play. Because we know exactly how high the walls are, for instance, we can easily resolve any attempt to climb them. The notes on opening and closing the main gate might come in handy in a whole lot of situations. Suppose, for instance, that a fugitive is being chased by Janda's soldiers and attempts to run out through the gate. Can the soldiers atop the wall close the gate in time to block his exit if they only have a few rounds' notice?*

The rusty bars under the stream are meant to provide clever players with a way they might slip into the valley without being noticed (and without paying their taxes).

The giant dinosaur statues are a descriptive detail that we hope to use to help the players form a mental image of the valley.

2. Curtain Walls: These structures are almost identical to the stoneworks that form the main gate. They are situated on the first rises on either end of the main valley entrance, making it even harder for invaders or predators to penetrate the complex. Four soldiers are stationed on each curtain wall at all times.

3. Oat Field and Mill. Wild oats grow over this part of the valley and a few enterprising souls have erected a primitive mill that they use to grind the grain into flour. They sell their output to Janda and her followers, various other residents of the valley, and the merchants who often pass through (see the **Merchant's Entrance** entry next month). For the most part, this is as close as it gets to organized agriculture on the Lost World. There isn't a more sophisticated agricultural operation for many miles around.

In total, there are approximately twenty commoners (assume they are all 1st level) operating the mill. They all live in tents on the outskirts of the oat field.

Some primitive agriculture helps explain what the residents of the valley eat and makes food more plentiful here. Since food will be relatively scarce across most of the environment, the adventurers will need convenient food sources where they can stock up before venturing out into the cruel world.

The Lost World is a tough place, and Janda's crew is supposed to be special.

Next month, let's pick up where we left off and continue to detail the keyed locations of Janda's Valley, deciding why each site is important for later adventures.

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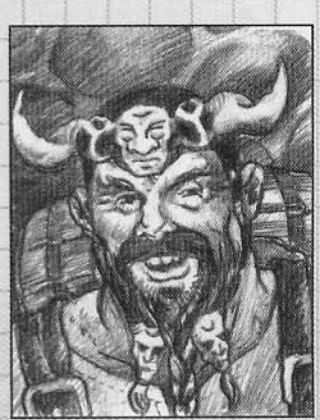

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by Mike McVey • diagrams by Nicholas Isaac

Preparing for War

Over the last six or seven months, "Role Models" has guided you into the miniatures painting hobby—from the very first steps of preparing and assembling your miniatures, to some of the techniques you use to create lighting effects, to dealing with different types of miniatures. All of the methods we have covered are equally applicable to painting any type of model. Thus, whether you're painting orcs or Napolionic soldiers, the techniques will stand you in good stead.

Starting this month, we'll change tack slightly and look at collecting and painting miniatures for a specific game—*Dungeons & Dragons: Chainmail*. Even if you aren't a *Chainmail* player, every installment will still include lots of useful information about miniature painting in general. If you do decide that you want to collect a warband and play *Chainmail*, "Role Models" will be your native guide through the whole process, showing you the exciting opportunities and fresh challenges involved.

Chainmail!

How does painting for *Chainmail* differ from painting for the D&D roleplaying game? Not much. Painting fur on a *Chainmail* miniature is basically the same as painting fur on a roleplaying miniature. What we will be looking at is how the techniques you have already learned apply to a different way of painting miniatures.

Chainmail is a skirmish miniatures game, one in which you collect a force of miniatures and pit them against another player in a tabletop battle. The great thing about skirmish games is that you don't need many miniatures, so you can assemble and paint your faction in a short time. Indeed, time-saving techniques are one of the first things we will consider. We've already looked at how to paint one orc, but how do you adapt the techniques to paint ten at once?

Another point to bear in mind when collecting and painting miniatures for *Chainmail* is group identity. This may sound complex, but in reality it's just a way to paint all the miniatures in your force so that they link together. In future articles we'll be looking at each of the factions in turn, examining the colors and iconography they use. First, however, we'll start with some basic techniques you can employ to link all of the models in your faction together into a cohesive group.

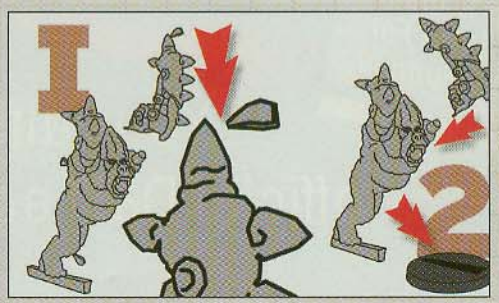
Production-Line Painting

When you start painting miniatures for *Chainmail*, you will have to adapt the techniques for painting single miniatures to deal with larger numbers of similar models. You must learn how to work on groups of miniatures together rather than one at a time, and there are a couple of reasons for this. The most obvious is that you want to be able to assemble and paint your warband quickly, so you can field your force and get on with conquering the Sundered Empire. But another reason is that working on several miniatures at the same time ensures that the colors match and the figures work better as a group. This kind of painting is often called "production line painting." What are the differences between painting single miniatures and production line painting?

First, you should work out a series of processes: clean up all the castings together, then assemble them at the same time, then undercoat them at the same time. You'll be amazed how much time you'll save by putting all the miniatures through the same process at once. It doesn't really take much more time to under-coat 10 miniatures than one.

You also need to start thinking of the miniatures as a group rather than as individuals. Each model doesn't need to stand up to close scrutiny; the point is that they work well as a group. Remember that these aren't display pieces, and the way they look together is more important than how they look singly.

Let's start by looking at an example of how you would go about assembling and painting a warband for *Chainmail*. As when you are painting anything, the first thing to do is clean and assemble the castings. Get all the components out of the packaging and put them all together (making sure you don't confuse the pieces from different models). Then go over each one in turn, clipping off flash and filing away any mold lines. You might want to put all the cleaned pieces in a box so you know which are finished. Next they need to be assembled and glued to bases. Work through



1 Remove Flash
Any small bits of manufacturing metal should be carefully trimmed or filed off.

2 Mount Bases
Attach any pieces and mount all of your miniatures onto the bases at the same time.

3 Mount to Strip
Mount your miniatures to a popsicle stick or heavy card to minimize your handling of the wet figures.

4 Primer
The set of matching miniatures may be primered all at once.

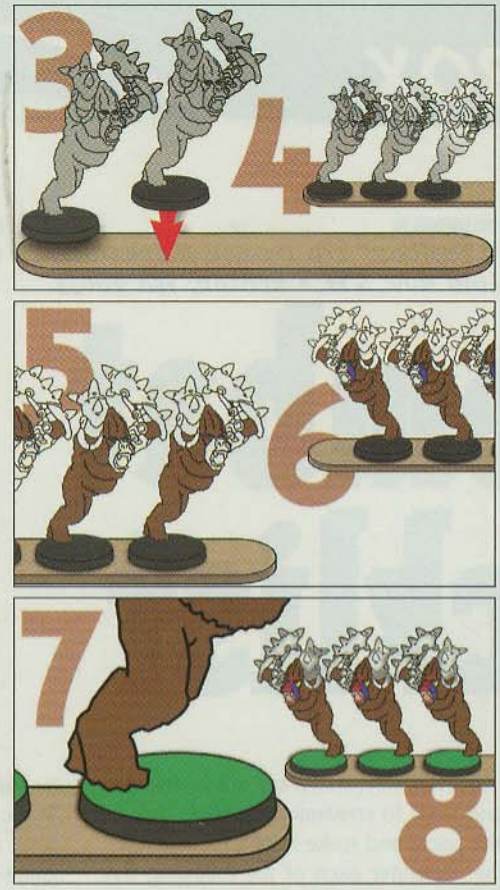
5 Begin Painting
Start with base coats of the larger areas. Do all the miniatures with the same color at the same time. Don't forget to rinse your brush periodically.

6 Continue Painting
Once the first color is dry you should begin painting the second color. Continue this "assembly line" until all of the figures are painted to your satisfaction.

7 Flock the Bases
Spread glue across the base and sprinkle it with flock, then proceed to the next figure. Don't spread glue on all of them at once because your glue will probably dry too quickly.

8 Varnish
Spray varnish your miniatures to protect the paint and enhance color. Carefully remove them from the strip.

You're done!



them one at a time until they're all finished. After that comes undercoating, and for this you should stick four or five miniatures onto a strip of card with double-sided tape and spray them all at once. Even if you normally undercoat with a brush (which is fine for single models), you should use a spray for undercoating multiple models—you'll save yourself a lot of time.

It may sound like a bit of a chore doing all this work before you start, but once you're done, you can put all your tools away and just think about the painting—and this is where the real production line starts.

Before you start, you need to have a clear idea of how you want the miniatures to look, and have all the paints you will need close at hand. Line up all of the models you are working on (four or five is about the right number to paint in one go), and then work through them one at a time, painting the same area on each. So if you're working on a group of gnolls, start by painting the base coat for the fur on the first miniature. When the first miniature is done, take the second in line and carry on. Repeat this until you've worked along the line to the last, and by the time you finish that one, the paint on the first will be dry, and you can move on to the next stage. In this case, the next stage would be to apply a wash to the fur to give it some shading and depth, and since the base coat will be dry by now you can apply it right away. If you were painting one miniature at a time, you would have to wait around for the paint to dry before continuing. After that, you just work through the miniatures as you normally would if painting one—highlights should be added to the fur next, then the skin should be base coated, then shaded, and so on until you have finished the whole figure, or in this case, all five figures.

You might think that this sounds like a dull, mindless way of painting—but it has its own attraction and enjoyment, and once you get into the rhythm of painting like this, the time just flies. There is something very satisfying about putting your brush down at the end of a painting session, and having five completed miniatures lined up in front of you.

Next month we'll start looking at group identity: how to paint your miniatures so they look like a cohesive group. D

7 TIPS

Here are some points to remember when painting models in a production line.

1 **Mix more paint than usual.** This might sound obvious, but once you've begun, you don't want to have to match a color by remixing.

2 **Don't mix *too* much paint.** Don't go to the other extreme and flood your palette. As the paint begins to dry out, just thin it out with a little water—it'll go further than you thought. Getting the right amount of paint is something you'll learn by experience.

3 **Don't assume the paint is dry before applying the next stage; *make sure.*** You are trying to save time, and if you make a mess on the miniature, you'll waste time cleaning it up.

4 **Be as neat as possible.** Just because you are painting quickly doesn't mean you have to rush the miniatures. Make sure to obey the basic rules of miniature painting—get good smooth coverage with the paints and make sure the colors don't overlap. A warband of simple and neatly painted miniatures will look great, but a carelessly painted one will look scruffy and unattractive.

5 **Wash your brushes regularly.** This is even more important when you are painting groups of models, as your brush will be in use far longer. Just rinse it out every few minutes, and re-apply the paint.

6 **Leave the basing to the end.** Wait until all the models in your warband are completed, which might be after several painting sessions, and finish all the bases in one sweep. Deal with them one at a time: apply the glue and dip the base into flock miniature-by-miniature; don't apply the glue to all off them in one go, or the glue on the first will be too dry when you want to cover it in flock.

7 **Apply spray varnish as you did the undercoat.** Stick the models to a strip of card and varnish them in groups of four or five. Remember to do this in a very well ventilated area away from flames or electrical equipment. Varnishing is best done outside when wearing a dust-mask to protect against the fumes.

by Johnn Four

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The Combat Checklist

Combat is one of the most thrilling parts of the D&D game, especially when the play is at a breakneck pace. Unfortunately, combat scenes often get bogged down as the DM and players struggle under a heavy load of information. At some tables, combat can become a yawnfest as the players wait for their harried DM to handle all the monsters, read the module and figure out what's happening. While the new rules do a wonderful job of streamlining calculations, there are still plenty of things to track from round to round.

10 MAPS *Track these items on a map to speed combat:*

- ☐ Nearby monsters or NPCs
- ☐ Traps and secret doors (and their DCs)
- ☐ Cover, concealment, lighting, footing
- ☐ Nearby allies who could save the day
- ☐ Furnishings or anything of tactical value
- ☐ Special area modifiers due to magic or spell effects
- ☐ Spot, Search, and Listen scores for inhabitants
- ☐ DC numbers for special areas, situations, or circumstances
- ☐ Status of doors (open, closed, locked, trapped, already checked)
- ☐ The party's route (for tracking them through smell or some other means)

Fortunately, there are a few tricks and tools to streamline combat, pick up the pace, and make things more exciting. Consider each of the following five game tools and keep the ones that suit your group.

1. Maps

Whether you run a published module or a homemade adventure, you probably have maps. You can turn these into a more powerful tool by making a few copies before play and marking all sorts of important facts, figures, and notes to help you when combat erupts. Since you are using copies, there's never any worry about keeping them in pristine condition.

10 CARDS *Keep index cards available for quick reference:*

- ☐ Character statistics and information
- ☐ NPC and villain information
- ☐ Monsters
- ☐ Spells
- ☐ Magic items
- ☐ Regional information
- ☐ Random encounters
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Character, monster, and prestige class templates for instant generation
- ☐ Charts and statistics for quick reference

2. Index cards

Index cards are an inexpensive, compact, and easy way to handle a ton of game information during battles. They can be sorted, filed in plastic boxes, and kept nearby when you run the game.

Organizing index cards is easy. You can sort cards into separate, labeled boxes, or you can use colored cards and create a coded system. For example, PCs could be on white cards, NPCs on yellow, spells on purple, and so on.

You can speed combat by creating blank card templates for use during unexpected situations. For example, you might have many monsters in your card library, and then a wandering monster roll catches you unprepared. But that's no problem, because you brought blank monster template cards to use during the game—just fill in the blanks! You can use a computer to print out blank templates by the dozen, or you can create copies by hand during commercials when you watch TV.

A great thing about index cards is that, once you've created them, you can use them over and over. After several sessions, you will have amassed a large collection of index cards, and combat will be faster than ever before.

You can get longer life from index cards by using sticky notes as well. For example, you put an important NPC on a card but add campaign specific information to a note stuck to it. That way,

once the campaign is over, you can reuse the NPC and simply start with a new sticky.

The best use for index cards is tracking initiative order and special combat circumstances, such as being *blessed*, or having a temporarily reduced ability score. Use a separate index card for each PC, NPC, and monster taking part in the battle. After initiative is rolled, stack the cards in initiative order and cycle through them as the battle rages on. Write important comments on the respective combatant's card (or use a sticky note), and you'll always be up to date without having to remember a lot of stuff from round to round.

3. Miniatures

Miniatures are a fantastic way to manage combat. They graphically display the scene for the whole group to see at the same time, which helps communication. They help everyone plan strategies and resolve rules issues, such as attacks of opportunity, and they give players who are waiting for their turn something to focus on and think about, which should speed decisions.

The new rules make movement and combat easy to manage. If you don't like playing with a large grid, you can use an unlined surface and a piece of string with inch marks on it for easy measurement. Also, if you need to show more figures than you have miniatures to represent (as when you throw a hundred goblins at your cocky PCs), try low-cost alternatives.

It's a good idea to number the NPCs' and monsters' figures. This makes tracking wounds and special modifiers for specific foes a breeze during frenzied combat. Whether you use index cards or notepaper, you can now simply reference foes by their number.

10 FIGURES *Some statistics can easily be tracked with counters:*

- ☐ Current round number
- ☐ Spell expirations
- ☐ Monster, NPC, and PC special ability expirations
- ☐ Remaining rounds for a magic item effect
- ☐ Number of rounds left until reinforcements arrive
- ☐ Multi-round skill use and status, such as for climbing or searching
- ☐ Rounds spent loading a heavy missile weapon and on which rounds it can fire
- ☐ Hit points remaining for special foes
- ☐ Initiative scores
- ☐ Total sum of attack or defense roll modifiers for the area and situation

4. Counters

Another great way to limit the mental gymnastics required during combat is to use counting tools. Get numbers like durations of cast spells or the current round number, out of your head and recorded with a counting device.

5. DM screen and combat binder

A DM's screen is an invaluable resource because it holds a lot of information for quick access during play. It's also a great place to make secret dice rolls and hide private notes. Even if you prefer a clear space between you and the players, you can always set a screen on a side table or on the floor by your chair. Also, most screens are collapsible, so you can lay it flat until needed.

Consider what additional charts, statistics, and information would be handy to add to your screen. You can always make photocopies of pages or charts from the rulebooks and clip them on so you can flip through them during a skirmish.

Another great tool is a special binder, folder, clipboard, or duo-tang for storing important combat information for quick access during the session.

Sticky notes are great for screens and combat binders, and a color-coding system for the notes, or for the pages in your binder, will help you access information even more quickly.

Another item you might want to consider making is a custom index page. Currently, each of the core rulebooks, and all rules supplement books, have independent indexes. You might find a unified index of pages that your group often researches a useful tool to clip to your screen or slot into your binder.

If you can free up your mind as much as possible from the counting, statistics, and special rules of combat, then you'll be less fatigued as the game session goes on, and you'll have more brain power to lend to other important activities, like roleplaying the foes well or thinking up clever battle tactics.

10 LISTS *Frequently-used reference can be attached to your DM screen:*

- ☐ DCs of various skills and activities
- ☐ Attack and defense modifiers
- ☐ Photocopies of feat descriptions
- ☐ Descriptions of monster special abilities and attacks
- ☐ Instructions for special combat actions like grappling
- ☐ Photocopies of the core rulebooks' indexes
- ☐ House rules, such as critical hits or fumbles
- ☐ Full statistics for important NPCs and villains
- ☐ Party statistic summary sheet
- ☐ Combat logs or planners

10 MINIATURES *Substitute common items for unavailable miniatures:*

- ☐ Glass or plastic beads
- ☐ Pennies or other coins
- ☐ Pasta noodles
- ☐ Small toy figures
- ☐ Dice
- ☐ Cardboard figures
- ☐ Painted poker chips
- ☐ Plasticine or modeling clay
- ☐ Painted bottle caps
- ☐ Gummy bears, Smarties, and M&Ms

5 SURFACES *Inexpensive miniature surfaces are easy to find:*

- ☐ Dry-erase boards
- ☐ Battlemats found in hobby stores
- ☐ 3-ft. by 5-ft. pad of graph paper with 1-inch squares
- ☐ Felt cut into various shapes and a large cloth with a grid drawn upon it
- ☐ Acetate, paper protectors, or other clear plastic to slip maps under

5 COUNTERS *Common items can be used as counters:*

- ☐ Cribbage board
- ☐ Knitting row counters
- ☐ Dice
- ☐ Beads, pennies, or poker chips in a clear glass
- ☐ Deck of playing cards

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YOU'RE COMPLETELY INVISIBLE TO US. GO WALK AROUND DOWNTOWN AND SEE IF PEOPLE IGNORE YOU.
GOOD THINKING, DRUFF. EVERYONE IGNORES THAT GUY ANYWAY.
NOT ANYMORE! HE JUST MOONED THE MAYOR'S WIFE!

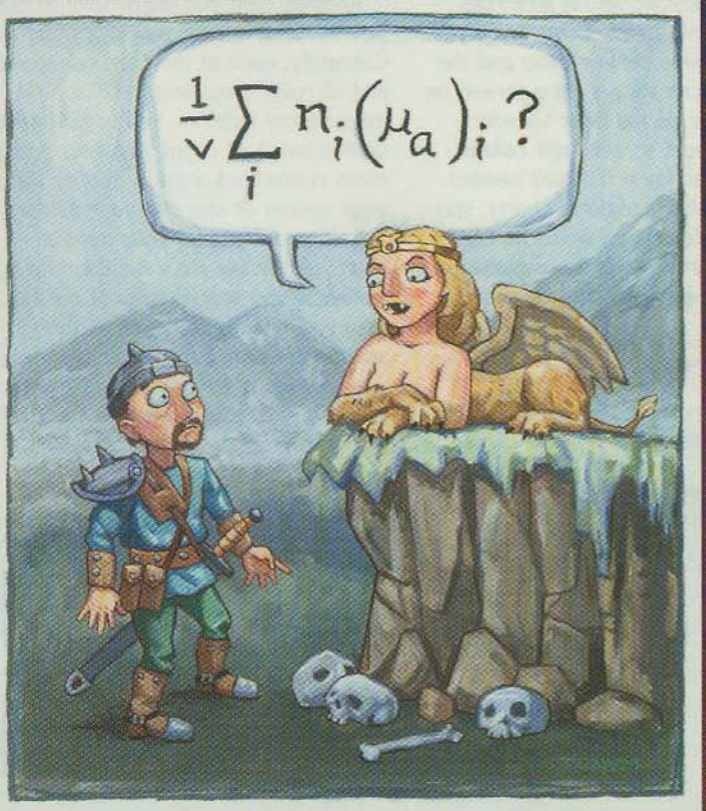
JERRY SELTZER

THE UNSPEAKABLE OAF by John Kovalic

SMOKEY THE BUGBEAR

E.B. WAGNER

You killed it, you bury it!



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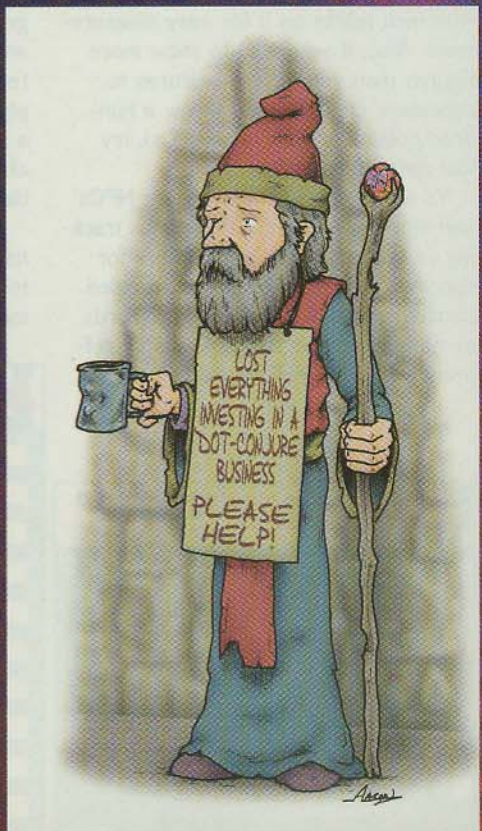

AARON WILLIAMS

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AS WE SAW IN OUR LAST EPISODE - DIXIE HAS CONQUERED THE EARTH
WHAT?! SINCE WHEN?!
FOOL! YOU SHOULD DO YOUR OWN PROOFREADING!
I WON'T ALLOW THIS!
OH YOU ARE SO CUTE!
FLING HIM INTO THE RED DUNGEON OF FUN.
YERS MISTRESS.
I'LL JOIN YOU THERE LATER, SWEETIE.
THUG
SO-! YOUR ENEMIES ARE CRUSHED, AND YOU'RE EVIL QUEEN OF THE WHOLE GOL-DARNED WORLD! NEAT! SO WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?
1. ROISTER IN THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH. HEY, YOU'VE EARNED IT, AND REALLY, WHO'S GOING TO STOP YOU?
Hmmm... WHAT TO WALLOW IN TODAY? FOOD OR SEX?
... EXCELLENT POINT. GUARDS? DIP HIM IN CHOCOLATE.
YERS MISTRESS.
THAT'S IT? THAT'S THE BEST THE QUEEN OF THE WORLD CAN COME UP WITH FOR FUN? HA!
2. TEST YOUR THEORIES. DO YOU HAVE UNORTHODOX IDEAS REGARDING GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICS, EDUCATION, EUGENICS, OR RELIGION? HEY - TRY THEM OUT!
ANOTHER VILLAGE DESTROYED, MISTRESS.
GEE - I GUESS DYNAMITE ISN'T A FOOD GROUP.
NO - REALLY?
AH - AND HERE'S OUR TEST SUBJECT FOR MY 'STYROFOAM DIET' EXPERIMENT!
3. BE PETTY. IT WILL DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM ANNOYING YOU.
SO THIS VILLAGE WAS THE CENTER OF THE REBELLION. I THINK THE SECOND THING WE'LL DO IS PUT YOU ALL TO WORK IN THE SALT MINE.
BUT... BUT THERE IS NO SALT HERE, MISTRESS.
AH - NOW FOR THE FIRST THING...
4. PREPARE FOR DEFEAT. RIDICULOUS, OF COURSE, BUT AN AMUSING EXERCISE. SO SET UP THAT SWISS BANK ACCOUNT, ADD THAT SECRET DOOR IN THE DUNGEON, AND CULTIVATE OLD FRIENDS.
THE MISTRESS HAS ESCAPED? WELL I HAVEN'T SEEN HER, BUT PERHAPS MY OAFISH SERVANT HAS. LET ME GO KICK HER A FEW TIMES AND ASK HER.
HERO OF THE REVOLUTION
END!
HNG!

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